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THE SUPERIOR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION GAMES MAGAZINE
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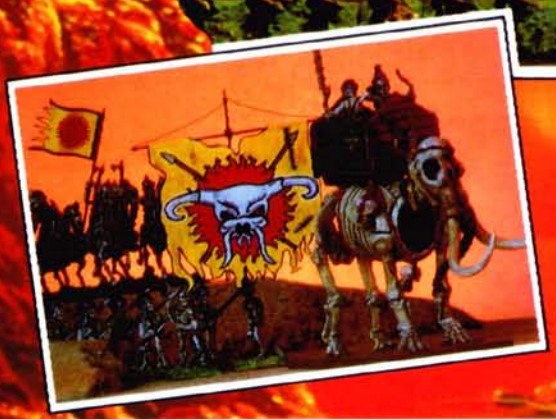

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THE SUPERIOR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION GAMES MAGAZINE

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Editorial

WHO was it said "You can't please everybody, so you've gotta please yourself"? In the new - look **ADVENTURER** last issue everybody seemed to like at least **parts** of it. I think what we have achieved is a much needed broad outlook on fantasy and science fiction, with a core gaming content, supplemented with 'peripheral' articles, artwork and cartoons. At least that is what we have tried to do.This time, we have tried to bring more 'thoughful' elements into gaming, with deductive, calulating articles and fiction, and a real test to the mental attributes of any GM with THE SHOW MUST GO ON.

By the way , if you haven't already heard yet; **ADVENTURER** is now monthly, with issue 5 out in mid October.

Ste Dillon.

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81 Leather Brown
82 Earth Brown
83 Chocolate Brown
91 Gold
92 Silver
93 Bronze
94 Brass

Gold And A

This is a medieval mystery for role-playing games, particularly suited to **Chivalry & Sorcery**. It bears similarity to **Consulting Detective**, but is geared towards either a group of **2-3** players working together, or for two or more PCs competing to solve the mystery first. The latter case would need secret communication between the **GM** and the players.

Each player has a maximum possibility of earning **1,000** exp minus **100** exp for each location point travelled to (not including certain parts of the Inn) minus **100** for each incorrect accusation of murder.

If the players discover those responsible and report to the Steward, he will send a group of **Men-at-Arms** to aid the PC in capturing the villains. Begin by showing the map to the players. You may photocopy it for use in play.

*START

The August sun shines down upon the Summer Fair being held at **Graythorpe Village.** People come from miles around to buy and sell goods. Stalls and barrows cover the market place selling all sorts of things such as foreign fruits, spices, silks, jewelry and all manner of paraphenalia. Cattle pens line the field behind the Lord's demesne where farmers are buying and selling livestock, grain and other common foodstuffs. Behind the fair you can make out the colourful tents and **Gypsies** and **tradesmen.**

Leaning leisurely back on your stool outside the **Wheatsheaf Inn** you watch the bustling market place whilst sipping your flagon of ale. A young couple, arm in arm, leave the scene walking past the inn towards the old wooden bridge. A gang of children pretending to be knights on horseback joust in the track in front of you.

After a few minutes of sunning yourself, you return inside to refill your empty flagon. The innkeeper, in a friendly mood says, **"Tell us a tale or sing us a song, young sir and you can have the next drink on the house."** This you do to the amusement of all the guests, and a hearty round of applause as you finish. Taking the freshly filled flagon you return outside just as the first few drops of a summer shower start to fall. The shower is over quickly but manages to soak those who did not take shelter.

The children return, playing in the track then running off towards the old bridge and the wood beyond.

Time passes and the market scene returns to normal. Suddenly, a scream is heard and the gang of children come running back along the track from the woods. The eldest boy, shouting at the top of his voice cries; **"Mary! Mary Appleton, she lies dead in the Old Wood and we heard a horseman ride away."**.

A large man pushes past you and walks towards the crying child. He is **Edward Boswell**, the Steward of the Manor, currently in charge of all the Lord's estates who is at present away on business. He comforts the children and speaks to the crowds who have quickly assembled. **"Anyone willing to assist me in discovering the villain responsible for this act, please step forward."** A hush falls- no one moves.

You calmly finish your drink and step towards the steward. "I will help sir, to the best of my abilities, but I am a stranger to this village and know no-one by sight or name." The steward replies, "Thank you, Sir, have no fear, **Percy Brewer** the Innkeeper knows all the villagers and some of the regular travellers, and he will assist you with names and faces. Now, if you will excuse me, I must organise the safe carriage of the girls body to the rector's house." He turns and strides off towards the Old Wood, closely followed by four Men-at-Arms.

At this point, the player should decide where he would like to begin his investigation. The referee proceeds in the relevant chapter.

*The Inn

Run by **Percy Brewer**, a charming man who is normally rushed off his feet but loves every minute of it. When asked, **"Where does .... live?"** he says either:-

"Mary Appleton used to live with her family at the Farmers' cottage - **No. 35** I think."

"Julia Edmonds and family live in the large farm house at the end of the village - **No. 1** I think."

"Edward Boswell lives with his family in the manor and is in charge of all the surrounding land until **Sir Geoffrey** comes back."

"Father David is our parish preacher and he lives in the Rector's house next to the church."

"Steven Greensworth lives with his father **Norman Greensworth** and the rest of the family at the big farm house west of the Old Wood. His father is the richest landowner apart from Sir Geoffrey. His house is **No. 13.**"

The following points marked with an * require the loss of **100 exp** from the total.

When asked, **"Do you know where ..... is?"** he replies:-

"Alfonzo Cordando? Oh yes, he is here. He is upstairs with a lady friend, I think. I'd better get him for you."

Percy climbs upstairs and returns a few minutes later followed by a tall dark skinned man wearing a striped jacket and trousers, a funny hat and large pointed slippers. "What can I do for you my young friends?" he says, slapping you heartily on the shoulders.

*Slippers and Dog

"Yes I wear these shoes all the time - my darling wife makes them for me but many other entertainers and members of my guild wear them. As for dogs - I hate them - brings me out in a rash."

*Hankie

"Very cute, not mine though."

*Coin

"I have seen many a gold coin but never have I seen one with these strange markings."

***Steven Greensworth?** Yes, he's here. He left his horse in the stables about ten minutes ago and asked if he could stay here for the night. He looked pretty upset, trouble with his father again, I guess; either that or the thought of the wedding. I put him upstairs in the spare room. I'll show you the way."

Percy leads you to the door and you knock lightly.

A young man's voice replies, "Go away and leave me alone."

*Accusation

(If the players accuse Steven)

Steven leaps to the door, swings it open and shouts, "Never! I love her." He draws his sword and attacks the closest player. He will attack for one round only then collapse in tears. He will then explain as detailed below:

*Conversation

(If the players converse with him)

"Steven Greensworth, I know of your relationship with Mary Appleton. Can you shed any light on who the murderer might be?"

"No sir I cannot, but I will tell all I know if it will help in any way. I have been forced by my father into a marriage which I and my proposed wife do not wish. I loved Mary and planned to run away with her today. I stole some gold coins from a chest my father has under his bed and met Mary in the market.

She wanted a silk hankie with my initials on so I bought one for her. I told her to go home and collect her clothes and to meet me in the clearing in the Old Wood where we always used to meet. I would return there with my horse and we would ride away together.

I gave her the gold in the pouch in case my father realised it was missing. We walked back to the bridge together and I went home to get my horse.

I gathered all the things I thought we would need then saddled my horse and prepared to leave. It suddenly started to rain so I stayed in the stable until it had stopped.

Summer Shower

By Paul Tarrant

I rode straight to the clearing and saw Mary lying face downwards in the mud. I ran over to her and rolled her over on to her back. I could see she was dead. Then I heard the children playing and I panicked, ran back to my horse and rode away. This is all I know but if you find out who killed her, I want to see him hang."

Clues: Percy will answer all questions at a cost of 100 exp.

*1) Gold Coin - "These are special coins given by the King to exemplary fighting men in his last war abroad. I have owned a few myself.
There is only one man I know of who could still own coins like that. He is Norman Greensworth."

*2) Silk Hankie - "The initials could mean anything. A silk trader might be able to help more."

*3) Slippers and Dog Print - "The dog could be anyones. Slippers are usually worn by women or entertainers."

*Market Place

The market place is a clutter of small stalls and barrows selling a multitude of products ranging from exotic herbs and spices, fruits and vegetables, wines and ales, to silks, linens, jewelry and other trinkets.
Villagers and travellers alike are engaged in buying and selling; entertainers and musicians wander about gathering audiences and collecting money. Children play amongst the crowds drugged by the multitude of colours, shapes and sounds.

*Silk Seller

The silk seller greets you with a beaming smile and a friendly shake of the hand. "Do you recognise this hankerchief?", you ask, handing him the white silk square. "Yes, I certainly do", he replies. "See those small blue initials? That's my name, Simon Gale, and those large black letters are the initials of the young man who bought it from me only this morning. His name escapes me, I'm afraid. He gave it to the young lady he was with - lovely young thing she was, pretty as a picture with lovely long brown hair. Funny thing was", he continued, "I only wanted two silver pieces for it but he gave me a gold coin and said that was the only coins he had. I had trouble giving him change for that so early in the morning."
"Did you notice anything odd about the coin?"
"Come to think of it, yes I did. It had an eagles head on it. Not seen one like that before, but it was real, I bit it you see. Actually he had a big pouch of them and I seem to remember him giving the pouch to the girl at the same time as he gave her the silk hankie. Suddenly a drunken gypsy came staggering up to the girl, grabbing out at her as if he was falling over and snatches the purse from her. Luckily the young man tripped the gypsy and retrieved the purse. The gyosy apologised and staggered off although the young man didn't seem convinced. He said something to the girl which sounded like "Meet me in our clearing," then he wished me well and they left arm in arm.
"Thank you sir, you've been very helpful."

*Cattle Fair

General

The cattle fair is a hive of business. Farmers from all around are buying and selling their livestock and foodstuffs. You see pigs, cows, bulls, chickens and goats, to name but a few, all in various pens and cages awaiting the auctioneer's hammer. Behind the fair you see the colourful tents and caravans of the travelling tradesmen and entertainers. Fortune tellers, gypsies, acrobats, musicians and dancers are all busy practising or selling their wares.

In the centre of the encampment you spot a sign saying **Alfonso Gordando-** Troubador Extraordinaire. The sign seems to indicate that he is the leader of this entertainment.

*Farmers

You ask, "Has Mr. Greensworth been here all day?"
"Yes", one old farmer says, "I can vouch for that. He has bought all the good livestock he can get, as he does most years."

*Alfonzo's Tent

As you enter the tent you see a very fat woman sitting in a large wooden chair chewing something and busily sewing together a pair of pointed slippers. Without lifting her eyes from work she says, "He's not here, he's at the Inn drinking away our money with one of his fancy women. So get lost! She spits some of the weed she was chewing into the grass inside the tent and leers at you. You leave fairly rapidly.

*Gypsies

As you approach the yellow gypsy caravan you see two men sitting on the steps by the door. One is cleaning brass tack, the other is polishing a pair of pointed flat leather shoes whilst whistling to himself. The man cleaning the brass stops and says, "What do you want here, stranger?"

"I was wondering what you knew about the murder of Mary Appleton", you reply.
"What", shouts the man, **"are you saying that we killed this girl?"**
All of a sudden a dog starts barking from behind the caravan. "Burt", says the

man, "shut your dog up." The other disappears behind the caravan - a yelp is heard and the dog stops barking.
"Now listen mister, go away and pick on someone else for a change. We ain't done nothing."

***Hankie**
"Very pretty, but gypsies can't afford hankies - we use our sleeves."

***Gold**
"Oh, rich are we? Unfortunately we don't get to see a lot of gold."

***If accused**
"Oh Yeah! - Prove it."
The players will be expected to explain what happened the best they can. If the **GM** decides that they are close enough the gypsies will attack.

The Attack
Normally three gypsies are present who fight the players on a one to one basis - the others will flee. If there are more than three players the appropriate number of gypsies will appear and fight.
After two rounds of combat the **Steward** and five **Men-at-Arms** will arrive bringing any escaped gypsies back and capturing the remaining gypsies who are alive. The gold coins will be discovered hidden in the caravan.
The players will be awarded the appropriate experience.
If they fail to convince the GM they know what really happened, the gypsies will tell them to go away, and once the players have left they will flee in their caravan.
The players will be awarded the appropriate number of experience points - halved.

***Rector's House**
Walking up the stone path towards the doorway of the Rector's house you get the overwhelming feeling of peace and serenity. A small man looks out from a window in the upstairs of the building and then disappears. Before you have chance to knock, the door is opened and Father David is welcoming you inside. He is a small round man with a radiant face which looks somewhat downcast at the events of today.

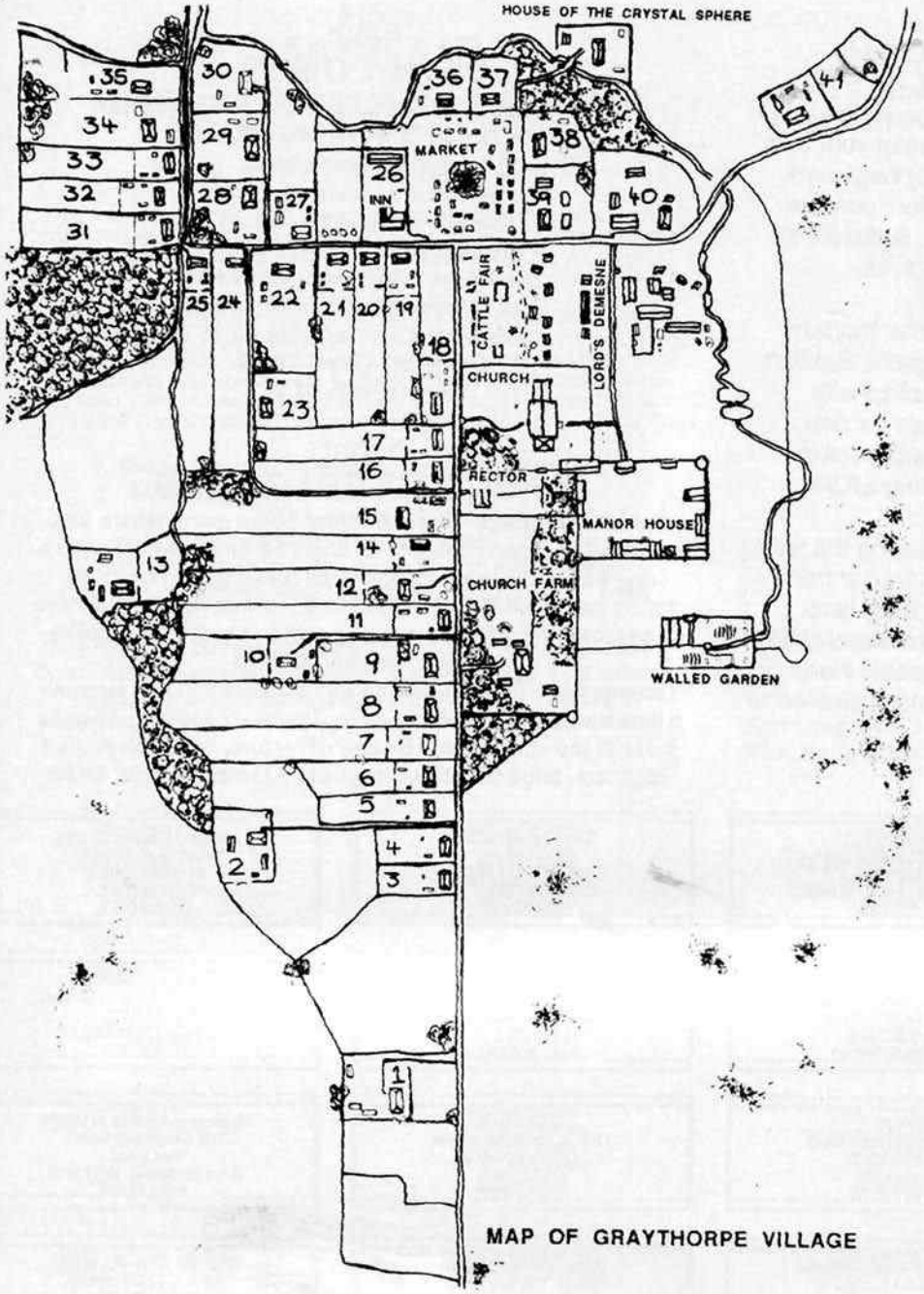
"Come in, come in," he said, "The steward told me to expect you. I'm glad you have arrived as I was just about to wash and prepare her, but it is probably best that you see her as she was found."
He leads you upstairs to a small tidy room. On a table in the centre of the room lies the body of Mary Appleton. Her eyes have been closed and Father David has already managed to smooth the lines of fear from her face. She lies on her back as if asleep; Her long brown hair fanned out beneath her head. You move towards the body and begin to examine it. The table is wet from the rain on her clothes but you notice, even though there are traces of soil and grass upon her smooth face, the front of the dress is quite dry.
You gently lift her head and push her wet hair to one side. At the base of the skull you find dried blood caking the hair to the head.
"She was killed by a blow from behind to the base of the head," the father explains. "Must have been a club or something blunt," he murmers, looking very sad. "Now, if you've finished I must get on.
"Just one thing, Father, was she found with a pouch or bag?"
"A bag of clothes was found close to her," he replies, "But certainly no pouch or money has been given to me to look after."
"Thank you Father. I will leave you now."

***Julia's Home**
On approaching this large farmhouse you are greeted by four young girls aged between six and thirteen. They lead you to the door then run off behind the house, giggling. The door is opened by a tall plain looking dark haired woman aged around twenty-four. She is wearing a long green linen dress.
"Please may I talk with Julia Edmonds?" you ask, bowing slightly towards the woman.
"You are speaking to her," she replies. "How can I help you?"
"Have you seen Steven Greensworth or do you know where he is?"
"I haven't seen Steven for weeks, yet we are to be married the day after tomorrow," she replies. "It is an arranged marriage, you see. His father is very rich and desires our land. I have no brothers so my father agreed that I should marry Steven. I do not hate him but there is no love between us either."
Thank you for your help," you reply, and take your leave from the woman.

***Steven's House**
You follow the track by the Old Woods, over the bridge and towards the Greensworth's farmstead. About halfway across the meadow you hear a shout up ahead. A tall burly man wearing a leather jacket and trousers and a fine pair of boots releases a large dog which runs towards you. It stops about five feet away and proceeds to growl and snarl viciously. The man walks up behind the dog and says, "What are you doing on my land? Begone this instant or I will set the dog on you."
"Please sir," you reply, "is your son around? We wish to talk to him about the murder of Mary Appleton."
"He knows nothing about it. He is to marry Julia Edmonds the day after tomorrow. That's what I want and that's what's going to happen and nothing will stop it. Anyway, in reply to your question, he's not here and neither is his horse but he had better be back before the marriage or I'll kill him, or worse. Now go, I have no further time for you. I must return to the cattle fair before the best cattle are sold." He calls the dog and strides off across the meadow, his boots leaving deep marks in the mud.
*If accused of murder he will laugh and say he has been at the cattle fair all day. If you ask at the fair, farmers will confirm it. But he will add, "I am not sorry to see the back of Mary Appleton."

***The Old Wood**
As you cross the old wooden bridge you notice two Men-at-Arms standing just inside the wood. As you approach them the tallest man dressed in a chain hauberk and armed with a longsword and shield, steps out and says, "Halt, what business do you have here?" When you reply that you are assisting the steward with the murder investigation, the man relaxes and leaving the other one on guard, leads you into the wood saying, "Mr. Boswell has taken the body of the girl to the Rector's house to be blessed. What a terrible thing to do; such a sweet thing as well and to find her lying with her face staring up at the sky, eyes wide open and fear written all over her, it was horrible. I've been to battle sir, and killed men before, but to find a young girl murdered in my own village - it's digusting."
By now the man has led you to a clearing, deep enough into the wood not to be spotted by anyone walking along the track. He points to the edge of the clearing close to a large bush and says, "That was were the body was found."
Stepping carefully across the clearing you notice hoof prints of a horse in the wet ground entering the west side of the clearing. The prints lead to a fallen tree and lead straight to the bush and then back to the fallen tree. Upon reaching the place where the body was found you notice a dry patch of flattened grass and next to it a wet patch of crushed grass. With closer inspection in the dry area, pressed into the loose earth you find a strange gold coin marked with an eagles head.
Looking up, deep in thought, you glance towards the bush and there, caught in the lowest branch, is a white silk hankie. Moving over to the bush you retrieve the material and find embroidered upon it two sets of initials. Along one edge in small blue stitching the initial S.G. and again, but in the corner, in large black letters the initials S.G.
Behind the bush the ground becomes quite sticky. Looking down you see the clear print of a large pointed slipper and a paw print which looks to be that of a large dog.
Walking back towards the Man-at-Arms, carrying the coin and hankie, you almost trip over a small curved stick lying on the ground. Picking it up to throw out of the clearing you spot blood and long hairs caught on the rough bark. Upon reaching the soldier he asks if you have discovered anything that might lead you to the murderer. "Yes," you say "I think I have," and he escorts you to the track.

***Mary's Home**
As you approach the small farm cottage you hear the sound of women crying. You knock solemnly on the door and after a moment the door is opened by a small balding man wearing a rough cloth hose. "What can I do for you, sir?" he asks quickly. "I am investigating the murder of your daughter and wondered if you could tell me of anyone who you think could have done this thing."
"Mary was liked by all the village.



MAP OF GRAYTHORPE VILLAGE

I cannot understand why she was murdered."

"When was the last time you saw her?"

"Earlier on today, just before it rained. She came home and put a few clothes into a bag and asked me if I could give her some money. I thought she was going to the market so I gave her five copper pieces as a treat. We are poor people you see, sir, I cannot afford very much for my children."

"Who were her closest friends?"

"She had many friends but her closest must have been Steven Greensworth who lives in the large farm house west of the Old Wood. I believe she wanted to marry him but his father had arranged for him to marry Julia Edmonds, the daughter of another landowner. His father is very rich, you see."

By this time Mary's mother comes to the door and asks her husband to go inside. When he has gone she says, "I can tell you one thing, Mary was four months pregnant but she would not say who the father was. I believe it was Steven Greensworth. Now, please leave us alone."

*Other Places

*Lord's Demesne

On entering the farm a young stable lad runs over and says, "Which cow be yours, master?"

"I have not bought any cows, lad. Now, do you know anything about the young girl's murder?"

"Bain't no one 'ere who knows anything about that, sir. We're all too busy with the buying and selling." He turns and hurries off.

*Church

On entering the stone church you see an old lady carefully preparing flowers and decorating the windows of the church. No one else is present.

"Old woman, do you know anything of the murder today?" I know nothing

"No sir. I am preparing the church for the wedding the day after tomorrow."

*Church Farm

Walking into the church's farmyard you notice a tall muscular lad carrying some sacks in a stable. As he seems to be the only one around you shout to him. He seems to ignore you, so you walk over and ask him if he knows anything about the murder. He peers at you, taps his ears with his fingers and points to the Rector's house. He is deaf.

*The House of the Crystal Sphere

Walking towards the gate into the walled courtyard you are stopped by two armoured women.

"I have come to see your mistress, the medium, to ask her advice about the murder today," you say.

"Our mistress is ill and can see no one today or tomorrow, thank you," replies one of the women.

*The Manor House

At the gate to the Manor's courtyard you are stopped by two Men-at-Arms.

"Halt strangers! Our Lord Sir Geoffrey Arundell is away on business and unless you have good reason to be here, I suggest you return to the village."

"I have come to see the Steward about the murder today."

"Wait here. I will see if he can see you." One of the men turns and enters the house. After about five minutes he returns. "The Steward is very busy. If you know who commited the murder, I have been ordered to accompany you with four other Men-at-Arms who will make the arrest. If not, I suggest you come back when you know who did it."

*If the players arrest the right person they are awarded experience as normal.
*If they arrest the wrong person they are removed from the case and are only awarded 100 exp.

*The Walled Garden

On entering the Walled Garden an old wizzened gardener scuttles over and shouts, "Begone, you have no business here. Leave at once or I will call the soldiers."
You leave.

*All Other Houses and Households Know Nothing Of Any Help.

Combat Details

Only two points of combat should occur. However, if the players must attack everybody, the GM will have to decide on the stats of those attacked and then arrest the players using the Man-at-Arms.
1)Peter Greensworth. Level 7. Yeoman at Arms with chain cuirass open faced helm - Medium Shield and Longsword. All details as C&S III Page 62.
2) The Gypsies - Leader Level 7. Brigand Hvy Leather Armour and Hood and Light Sword and Club. Details C&S III Page 62.
2+) Gang Level 5. Brigands as above.

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SHOPWINDOW

This issue, we take a special look at the current board games available on the market, but first, a review of the latest Runequest supplement, the infamous

Griffin Island (£15.95)
Published by Avalon Hill

This is number six in the new range of boxed supplements for Runequest from Avalon Hill but designed, as ever, by Chaosium. A boxed set with two booklets of 32 and 50 pages respectively, with a chunky handful of player's handouts and a large players map.

The whole style of presentation is excellent, with an appealing cover illustration and well laid out contents. Avalon Hill, however, are still presenting us with pathetic paper covers on the booklets, which are really not on at the price.

Unlike the other supplements presented to us so far in the new incarnation of RQ, this has been seen before. This is the long loved **Griffin Mountain**, but in a new form. Unlike its first edition, which was based in **Balazaar** in **Glorantha**, this version is renamed **Griffin Island** and placed in the **'Gateway'** collection of supplements as generically useable. This is apparently much closer to Rudy Kraft's original write-up than the Gloranthan product which had a lot of Greg Stafford in it. Comparisons must be forthcoming, and to anyone who has become used to Balazaar as the rightful place for all this, you may not like the change.

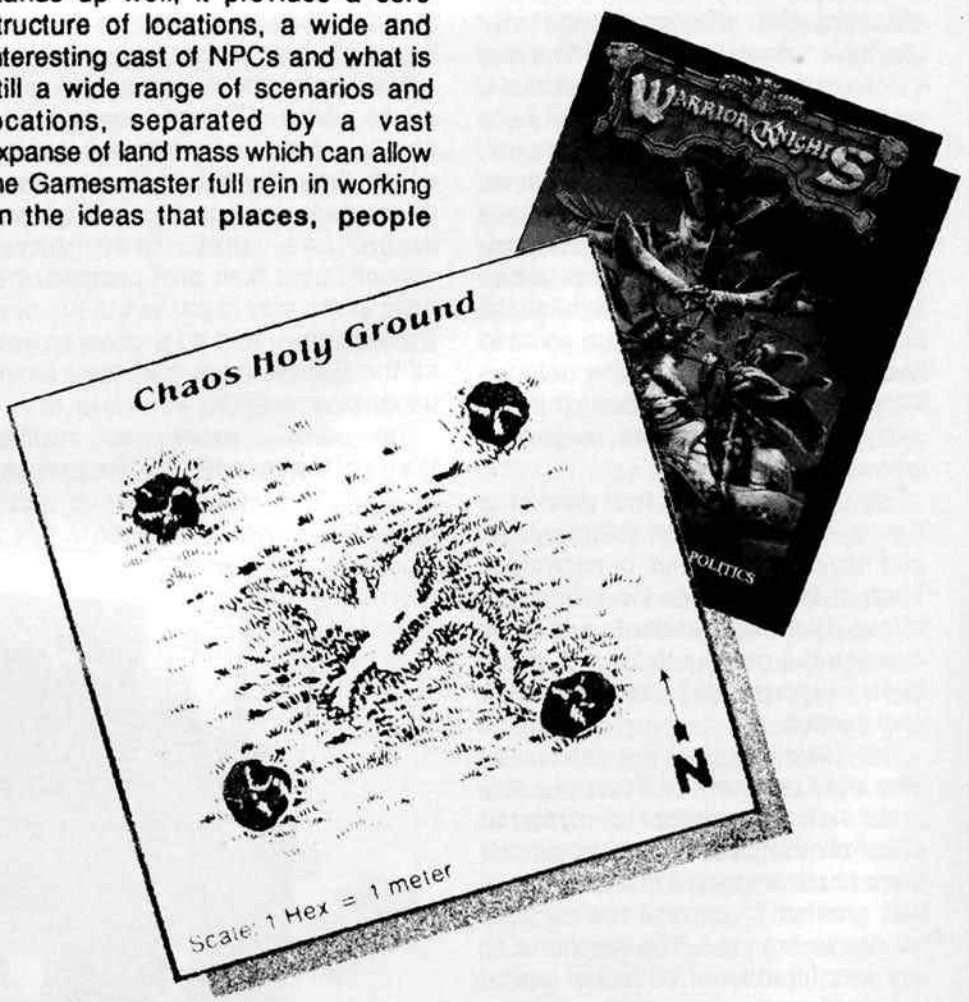
The Lunars are now Orcs, and a race of Giant Reptiles replaces Trolls, but much is identical. The citadels are renamed, as are many NPCs but they are the same people. If you have run or played Griffin Mountain, do not attempt this, it is essentially the same.

The best example must be that the **Balarazings** of GM are now the Zarings of GI, whereas the **Votanki** are the same in both. In comparison, GI does not hold up well against GM; it contains the same material, but much has been left out, many scenarios, places and 'nice bits' from GM are lost to us in GI. The prepared encounters which made GM so useful are not here, and in sheer page count GI comes a poor second.

However, ignoring its ancestory, GI stands up well, it provides a core structure of locations, a wide and interesting cast of NPCs and what is still a wide range of scenarios and locations, separated by a vast expanse of land mass which can allow the Gamesmaster full rein in working on the ideas that **places, people and scenario hooks** will inspire.

Although this feels like a shorter version of Griffin Mountain, it really is an excellent supplement and definitely a perfect beginning for the inexperienced referee. It is surprisingly user-friendly, despite its desperate layout, and it includes a run-through of a few sessions of play designed specifically for the neophyte referee and players. It survives the transition well, and with its new existence as an Island, it would fit into any world without disturbing any great cosmology.

In conclusion then, a great RQ/Gateway supplement, but marred by memories of its previous incarnation. Given the quality of material here, and the wealth of material compared to the 3 AD&D scenarios the money would otherwise buy you, I cannot do anything but recommend it to all new RQ Refs and all wanting an excellent and adaptable campaign setting to explore and extrapolate from. To those still clinging to RQII, and with standard RQ soon arriving at $15 (maybe £12?) they will be a declining number, I



would recommend you hunt down an old copy of GM, since the stats will work better, and it still repesents better value. So there we are, an excellent supplement, but mixed advice about buying!
Tom Zunder

Warrior Knights (£14.95)
Published by Games Workshop

Even a cursory glance at the contents is good enough to tell you that this game is not an ordinary one. A beautifully- finished gameboard, neatly presented rulebook, and at least twenty sheets of cards and die-cut coins go to make up the majority of equipment needed to play, finished off with a single six-sided die, 24 plastic shields (in six different colours, each one representing a different player), and a sheet of stickers which need to be stuck on their respective pieces.

All these pieces may make it sound more like a wargame but rest assured, although war is sometimes necessary, it's more a game where sneakiness, politics, skill, economics and general deception are the order of the day!

The gameboard has no less than 22 cities on it, four of which are overseas, and although they do little to help you reaching the winning conditions, they're a valuable source of income, which makes them almost essential if you're to establish yourself as a contender for 'Lord of the Empire'. Each city has its own Town Levies (100 Troops), apart from those overseas; its own intrinsic defence forces, and its own income value. Upon taking a city (by outright attack or siege), the town levies are yours to keep, as is its income. The defence forces remain and thus cannot travel with one of your nobles (explained below).

Each player takes the part of a Baron, owning his own Stronghold, and having four Nobles beneath him. Each of these nobles lead their own forces (usually numbering 400 on average but can reach lows of 0 and highs in thousands!), and have their own castles.

The basic object of the game is to take over as many cities as possible (over half the number of UNrazed cities on the board), and to ensure there is not a chance in the Kingdom that another Baron has the capacity for destroying you! The emphasis on un was intentional because one of the neat tactics that nobles usually employ is to Raze a city they've just taken; this yields a large amount of extra income and cuts the winning conditions down by one!

To the game's detriment is the fact that a single turn can take quite a long time to complete, especially if there are plenty of attacks and/or sieges to sort out. Strategy is of extreme importance in this game, just about every decision being made needs plenty of thought behind it to be successful in the long run (ie. In terms of winning the game!).

Economics play a major part too, as without money you'll find yourself in plenty of trouble, having revolts, desertions etc. to contend with. I suppose a good example of such importance can be seen if one makes the mistake of 'splashing out' at the start of the game. By turn 5 you'll find yourself making the refreshments for the remaining players in the game!

The game sequence ioccurs over three rounds; Two Wages/Move rounds, and an assembly round in each.

In the **Wages/Move** round, each player collects his Baron's income, pays off any debts/wages/support costs incurred, draws a Fate Card, Moves each of his nobles on the board, makes any attacks, and finally transfers any troops between any nobles/ strongholds/ concessions he might wish. All this usually takes about two or three minutes, during which time the other Barons have been passing notes, making any deductions they may have, consolidating their own position, etc. After which play is passed to the next Baron in turn, and so it goes on until all the Barons have had their move under close scrutiny.

The next round is another **Wages/Move** one, so the process is repeated once again for all Barons.

The next (and last) round of the game-sequence is the **Assembly stage**. Four Assembly Cards are drawn, as are Mercenaries cards. The first stage is an 'Auction of Mercenaries' in which, as can be expected, Barons bid for certain Mercenaries to see who gets them.

The second stage is **'The Voting Phase'**, in which items on the agenda are put before those attending the assembly. Once the number of votes for each Baron has been determined, the voting process begins.

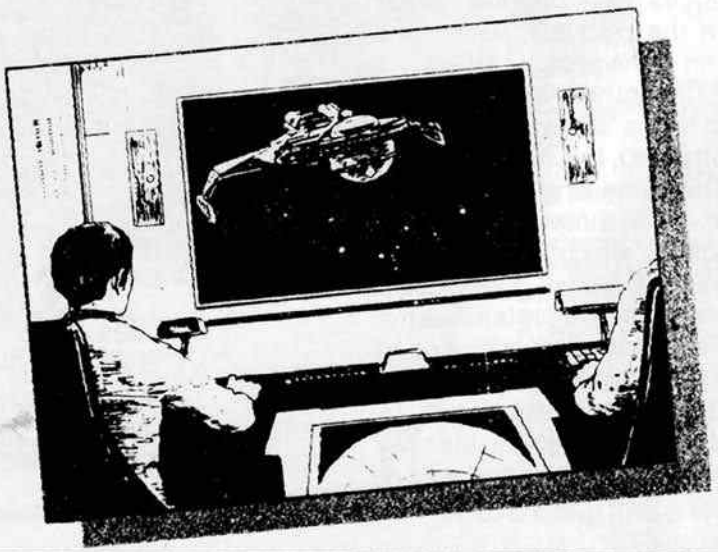
On the voting phase is a **'Stronghold Attack Phase'** which allows any Barons not attending the assembly to launch their own attacks on another Baron's stronghold. If timed right, these strikes can put an unaware Baron in deep trouble, so once again, careful planning is required.

The stronghold attack phase over, we come to the **'Trading Fleet Phase'** in which the previously-mentioned trading fleets are launched and any bets take place. Play continues in this fashion until one Baron comes out on top.

That's about it. An epic game, of Epic proportions, taking an Epic amount of time to play! Thankfully, it hasn't an Epic price. **Alex Bardy**

Federation & Empire (£29.95)
Published by Task Force Games

Of all the game design companies in operation today there can be few who can boast the level of support that **TASK FORCE GAMES** have given to their **STAR FLEET BATTLES** universe and its inhabitants. Their latest offering is **FEDERATION AND EMPIRE**, a



game of strategic combat whose aim is to simulate the events during the 18 years General War which, we are reliably informed, is destined to devastate the galaxy about 200 years from now.

To help you to achieve this aim, the game comes complete with 48 page rulebook, a large two-piece colour map, several charts and tables, dice and over a thousand playing pieces all of which are packaged in a bookcase style box whose artwork would not look out of place on the cover of a fifties pulp magazine.

As for the game itself, it is designed to be played by up to eight players with the average game lasting around ten hours; F&E is not a game to play in one evening, nor is it suitable for players who thirst for blood and thunder, as the winner of the game will invariably be the cautious, thoughtful player who is prepared to bide his time in his bid for galactic supremacy.

On initial inspection the rules present little that is new to the field of board wargames, with all the usual features such as combat, movement and supply being presented in the usual clear and concise manner for which **Task Force Games** are renowned. Another indicator as to the team behind the game is that, like **Star Fleet Battles, Federation and Empire** is designed to be expandable, and as such there are numerous indicators as to the contents of said expansions, ranging from new races through extra forms and counters, to information on additional campaigns.

As it is the game's intention to simulate strategic conflict, a portion of the rules are concerned with the control of the economic resources possessed by each of the various races involved. All the relevant details of supply, ship construction and the repair of battle-damaged vessels are described in a way as to seem both abstract and realistic at the same time. In fact, overall, this section has been well thought out and therefore is very easy to understand and use during play.

The same, however, cannot be said for movement, as with six different method available, the simple task of moving a force around the board is made complicated, particulary for the novice gamer.

As for the combat system, this is the major strength of the game, with each aspect being described clearly and extensively, including all the various optional and advanced rules, many of which draw heavily upon the Star Fleet Battles system, thereby making any veteran SFB'er feel right at home. It is this very fact that forces me to attempt to view the game from two standpoints, first as a novice gamer and secondly as an adherent of Star Fleet Battles; in the first case the game is a generally good example of it's kind and, although a little complicated at times, is well worth the effort which must be spent in learning to play. In the second case, the game adds little to the expansive details given by the countless number of Star Fleet Battles rulesbooks and supplements already available, and unless you would like some extra counters and a detailed map of the galaxy, or you are little short of fanatical about Star Fleet Battles, then I feel you may be disappointed with Federation and Empire. **Robert Blinkhorn**

Supremacy (£24.95) Published by Supremacy Games Inc.

In **Supremacy,** each player takes on the role of one of the present-day super-powers. The object of the game is straightforward enough; to reach a position of ultimate strength by becoming the only superpower on earth. To do this, players need to financially or militarily knock their rivals out of the reckoning.

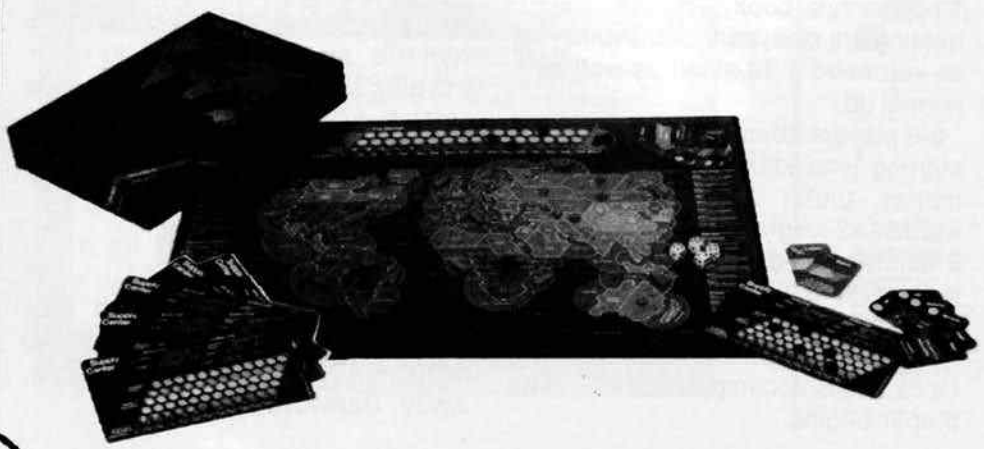
The game comes in a sturdy box illustrated with a colourful, stylised map of the world, which mirrors the game board. The board itself is of high quality 20" x 30" and neatly printed in over a dozen colours, clearly marked out with land and sea areas. Oceans are dark blue and coastal waters a suitably lighter colour. Each superpower's home territories are in it's own designated colour, which match the playing pieces, and the 24 remaining neutral areas are in mid grey.

All playing pieces are decently sized (even for my sausauge-like digits) plastic squares for armies, boat shaped for navys and black, circular ones for record-keeping. One problem I found when playing was that North american pieces are dark green, and South American ones lime green; under artificial light it was not easy to distinguish between the two.

The money comes in the form of dollar units, from one million up to one billion (which I unfortunately kept getting mixed up). There is a pack of 65 cards, one for each land territory to show what resources are available there, and 5 weapon cards which are used for research purposes. Players keep track of their raw resources, weapons, etc. with tokens on a printed card **Supply Centre.** Four 6-sided dice are included for combat resolution. The rules are clear and sensibly laid out. It took me only a half hour to carefully read through them once and recapitulate the vital points before commencing play. A big plus for smooth flow of play is that the order of play and outline of combat are neatly printed along both sides of the board, allowing easy reference for all players.

Raw resources are divided into 3 basic commodities- oil, minerals and grain. The price per unit is printed on a "market" chart at the top of the board, on a graduated scale from one million through to one billion dollars. The prices fluctuate as units are bought and sold at the market. Resources can also be traded directly between players at negotiated prices, irrespective of the world market.

Each player has companies in his home territories which supply raw resources to him once per move, and



neutral territories can be prospected to find new supplies, but this can prove very expensive.

Money is used to pay wages for the resource-producing companies and military units, as well as to pay for prospecting for more resources, and for researching and building weapons and military units. Raw resources are also needed for the construction of weapons, etc. as well as for movement; oil to fuel aircraft and ships, grain to feed armies on the march and so on.

Combat can use up a lot of raw resources, and it is easy to find yourself lacking the necessary supplies if unexpectedly attacked.

Players may research and then build nuclear weapons if they wish. The research can prove cripplingly expensive, and construction costs are rightfully steep, but a nuclear deterrent can be very reassuring. It is perhaps of political interest to note that the only player *'nuked'* in our game was the only player with no nuclear weapons to reply with.

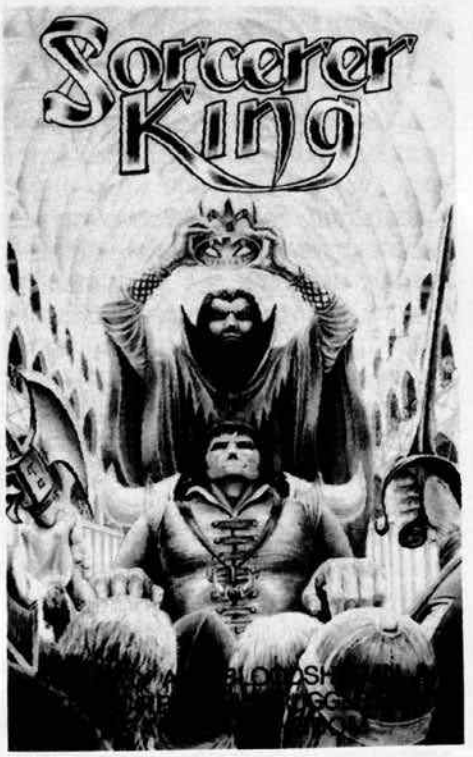
Orbital platforms called 'L. Stars' can also be built. These are even more expensive, but each one will destroy a targetted nuclear warhead 5 out of 6 times, hence providing the only effective defence against nuclear attack. L. Stars are also used as 'spies in the sky', and can also give an advantage in conventional combat. Once a nuclear warhead hits its target, that area is irradiated for the remainder of the game- a suitably depressing black mushroom piece is used as a 'tombstone marker' to indicate that everything in this area is destroyed.

For experienced players, a booklet of optional rules is provided, which includes an excellent handicap system. This stresses the wisdom of non-nuclear strategies for winning.

In conclusion, a thoroughly enjoyable game that left me itching to play again. Comparisons with *Diplomacy* are inevitable, and I would say it certainly ranks close with that classic game. Just as a warning for trigger-happy players, if 12 or more areas become irradiated, the game stops and everyone has lost. To quote the rules; *"Sic transit gloria mundi!"*- so passes away the glory of this world. **Martyn Tetlow.**

Sorcerer King (£14.95)
Published by Wotan Games

A quest for power. You, as a minor war leader, have just received word from your mage that the ancient Realm of Power has been rediscovered and in it, the throne of the Sorcerer King still stands. This once bastion of law is now over-run with the forces of chaos and, worse yet, the wizards of other war leaders have also discovered the realm. You must gather your forces and battle to cleanse the area of the 'chaos spawn', making yourself the one true Sorcerer King before the usurpers get there.



The components include a full colour, jig-locking map, 22x24 inches, and features the ancient Realm in all its glory. Large hexes portray open ground, forests, hills, roads, water, fortresses, Chaos altars and the ancient Throne Room. The playing pieces consist of 352 3/4" cardboard counters illustrating the units. Each unit seems to be a single creature with powers dependent upon its type. There are a total of 126 task, spell and power cards, and a slim, 10-page rule book. The only things missing are dice; particularly annoying as you need a 10-sided as well as a normal d6.

2-6 players attempt the quest, each starting with identical forces of the motley units; 2 magic-users, 2 warriors, 2 knights, 2 dwarfs, 2 elves, 2 centaurs and 1 troll. These units must first besiege and capture a fortress, which will be occupied by a random selection of chaos nasties. Once this is accomplished, the game proper begins.

Each player must complete a number of tasks, such as capturing and sacrificing units to pacify the Chaos gods, or cleansing an area; all the time searching for magical items and spells, making trouble for the other players and, most importantly, increasing their number of power points. These are essential so that they can be expended on recruiting more units, or on the promotion of your existing units. Promotion increases combat ability and the chance to find magic. Power points are gained by destroying enemy units in combat.

The game mechanics are simple, although at times rather ambiguous. However, a little common sense should clear up any problems. Movement is simply handled with mounted troops moving faster than foot, and units capable of using bonus movement cards from the deck, if they have them, can increase the distance moved in a turn. The only oddity is the ability of centaurs to carry foot units- a unit can move its full movement into a friendly centaur's hex, and then the centaur can move its full limit and carry the foot unit with it. This peculiar process allows a normally unmounted unit to move considerably further than a mounted unit if helped by a centaur.

Combat is bloody and not particularly well explained, but there are examples to clarify points. Magic involves searching for magical items and returning them to a fortress to exchange them for spells. These spells are useful in combat, for movement, and generally making life easier for you and more difficult for others.

First sight of the game suggests a lack of rules. This is reinforced as play goes on. I normally consider this an advantage to a game, but in the case of Sorcerer King, the economy on rules has left large gaps in the system. A large dose of common sense is necessary to plug the holes, but apart from this, the game is easy to learn and play. With 4 or more players, it is great fun, as a certain amount of skullduggery and out and out back-stabbing becomes essential for survival.

To conclude, SK could be a fun 'beer and pretzels' game, for when you can't be bothered with that 6-player game of Federation & Empire combined with Star Fleet Battles. **Andy Bamford.**

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6. **Runequest 3** (Avalon Hill)
7. **Ghostbusters** (West End)
8. **Palladium RPG** (Palladium)
9. **Paranoia** (West End)
10. **Twilight 2000** (GDW)
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12. **Basic Star Trek** (FASA)
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THE INTRO . . .

Someone once described me as 'the Derek Jameson of the hobby', a label I'm quite happy to live with. **Town Crier** should, after all, give as representative a view of the UK games industry as possible. And that is what I aim to do, keeping you, the reader, both informed and entertained.

CONFUSION, REMIX

It looks as though Games Day will go ahead this year, possibly due to timely intervention from Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone's persistence with this prestigious event.

Steve and Ian have done an awful lot for the hobby in the past, and it is very noble of them to volunteer for the herculean task of organising this,the biggest event in the UK gaming calendar. But even the dynamic duo can't be expected to run all of Games Day, and I gather Steve Baker, manager of Games Workshop's Dalling Road branch, has been brought in to help out.

Games Day takes place over 27-28 September at the **Royal Horticultural Society's** New Hall, London, and if it hasn't already passed you by, I look forward to seeing you there.

BACK TO THE EGG:

Hatch's plans to print and distribute MERP throughout the UK have suffered a setback as a result of financial difficulties. They are currently renegotiating a deal to get a UK-printed MERP out in January. Other enterprising UK companies are readying vast quantities of 2nd edition MERP for the christmas assault on the UK market.

FANTASTIC VOYAGES

Joining Fighting Fantasy in an attempt to take over the known reading world are Ian Bailey's **Forbidden Gateway** books, now being translated into French and Japenese. Meanwhile, Jon Sutherland is aiming for Sweden with his *historic adventure* books.

In the States, FASA are releasing **Battletech** books; these are novels based around the robots from the Battletech game. ICE's Middle-Earth quest books finally appear to have all their problems sorted out, and should be with us in time for Christmas.

Following the vogue for books is **TSR,** with a paperback version of Basic D&D, which I expect that most of you have already seen. Now the saddle-stiched volumes in the boxed set have been known to fall apart with constant use, and the mind boggles when considering the longevity of a paperback rulebook. I know my copies of **Dragon Warriors** fell to pieces after two sessions, and that's a game that doesn't require as much reference to the rules. I wonder if there is there some fiendish scheme in the games industry to make self-destructing rule books?

Peter Darvill-Evans, ex-publications manager of Games Workshop, has been hard at work writing his Fighting Fantasy book (cries of 'enough, enough...). Entitled **Beneath Nightmare Castle,** and illustrated by **Dave Carson,** the book is a gothic horror adventure which exudes plenty of ichor and has the requisite number of flailing tenticles. Many of you will already be crying 'it's Cthulhu!'- - as did I, in fact, but I also echoed the word "plagiarism", which I suspect will be heard long after the screams of terror from the book's investigators have died away. Peter, a keen devotee of Roget, will doubtless have many more words to describe it.

CRIME TIME

More news about **King Of Crime,** Mayfair's latest **DC Heroes** adventure; it features the *Secret Society Of Super Villains*- formerly *Flash's Rogue's Gallery*. The **SSSV** have taken over Central City, and crooks everywhere are competing for key positions in the organisation. The outcome of all this is a sudden surge in the crime rate which, naturally, the players must control. Sounds spiffy.

Also due for DC Heroes are 3 more adventures; **Don't Ask, Legion Of Superheroes: Adventure 1, and Firestorm.**

Titan are also entering the DC Heroes distribution war, with the result that even if you do only frequent specialist comic shops, contact with the game is going to be almost unavoidable.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS:

Fave rave game of the year among hobby wiseacres is **Paranoia** (you can tell it is so popular because it just can't be found in major games shops!). But, thanks to the UK printing by Games Workshop, this shortage will soon be alleviated.

It is expected that Paranoia will undergo the same treatment as the hardback Call Of Cthulhu, or will it? After all, the main thing about Paranoia is keeping the players completely in the dark, something that is readily accomplished in West End's printing because the small players' book is separate from the referee's. Parcelling the whole lot up in one volume seems to defeat this natty stratagem. However, GW have decided to take a positive approach in the matter; the hardback volume could well be divided up into sections, each with their own security clearance. Following each security division could be a second notice giving further warnings about the perils of having inadequate security clearance to read on- and woe betide any troubleshooter who defies these! Quite a delightful idea.

GETTING FRESH:

The **Wilderness Survival Guide** is the latest rule book to enter the AD&D stable. News of its arrival caused me to halt the rightful return of one sock to my right foot so that I could continue the tally of AD&D books I started last issue. Like the **Dungeoneers' Survival Guide,** the volume is intended to freshen up the AD&D game; the Wilderness Guide- naturally-covering overland adventures. More details about the WSG weren't forthcoming from TSR, but this I attribute to the wonderful way that TSR(US) keeps its UK satellite informed: new products seem to turn up unannounced at TSR's UK warehouse.

Other new products from TSR include **DL13** and **DL14**, the last of the DragonLance modules. These should be out now, as should Dave Arneson's 2 **Blacmoor** modules. I'm a little at a loss as to why the latter are being released, since Blackmoor is a veritable *antique* of D&D gaming. One blockbuster of a scenario pack is promised- **GDQ 1-7.** This is the combined Giants and Drow series, which achieved considerable notoriety when first released. They're still tough, respectable scenarios now, and the re-release is bound to prove popular.

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD:

The participants in DRAGON-AID looked rather pale and zombie-oid after they finished their 84-hour long AD&D charity marathon in late July. Besides setting a new record for non-stop AD&D, around £5,000 was raised for the Band Aid Trust through sponsorship and donations. Well done everyone who took part. If you missed Dragon-Aid, its still not too late to contribute and so provide help for the relief work in Africa; donations can be sent to: Dragon-Aid, c/o Victoria Kassner, 5th. Floor, Broadmeed House, 21 Panton Street, London SW1Y 4DR.

. . AND THE OUTRO:

There are still sectors of the gaming industry that even I fail to uncover: if there's an event going on, or if you know of something newsworthy happening in your area, then drop me a line at **Adventurer's** address. Photographs, if you have them, will be welcome!

Next Issue: a **Vampire** special, with an in-depth look at these *Children of the Night*, fiction by **Brian Lumley** once again, and scenarios for **MERP/D&D** and a rather novel **CoC** adventure. Watch out also for the centre-fold map by Robin Parry, a spectacular GM aid for any fantasy games referee.

by Ian Marsh, Adventurer Snoop Extraordinaire

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- White Fire scenario for CALL OF CTHULHU.
- The Black Tower for ROLEMASTER/AD&D.
- Psychology in gaming- Personality & motivation
- Blood Loss in AD&D.
- 'Method' role-playing- the actors' way.
- Opinion Poll Results.

Issue 2:
- VILLAINS & VIGILANTES Superhero scenario.
- The Black Tower (2) for ROLEMASTER/AD&D
- Fire On High (designing a magik system).
- Photographs of Denizen Miniatures.
- Photographing miniatures.
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- Peet Ellison's cover art and centre page poster.
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- Grenadier Models UK spotlight.

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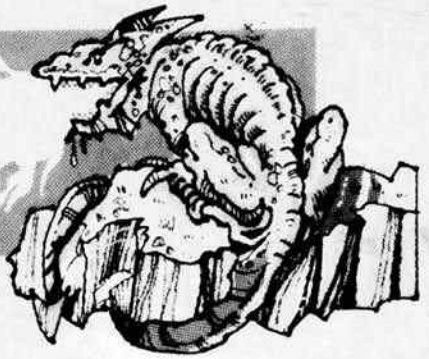
- CALL OF CTHULHU adventure in the Outer Hebrides.
- MERP/ Basic D&D scenario.
- Children Of The Night- Vampires in RPGs.
- Centre-page fantasy map GM aid.
- Metamorphosis and Lycanthropy.
- Spotlight on Citadel miniatures.
- Cover art by Robin Parry.

Adventurer is available from your local games shop or newsagent, price 90 pence. If you prefer, you can order by mail by sending a cheque or postal order for £1.00 for each issue, made payable to MERSEY LEISURE PUBLISHING, to Mersey Leisure Publishing, 85 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6DG.

HOUSE OF BITES
FEY, AMBERGRIS + THE REV. AMBSACE HAVE FORCED ENTRY TO AN EERY DEMESNE, WHERE THE TRAIL OF FEY'S BROTHER HAS LED THEM.
SSHH! HE'S PROBABLY DEAD. LETS GET OUT.
WOWSER! WHERE ARE YOU?
MAYBE IN HERE
THE TRAPS ON THE DOOR DIDN'T REALLY SAY WELCOME, FEY..
THEY'VE COME FOR THEIR COMRADE AND NOW COVET THE BANQUET!.... AH WELL, SINCE NO ONE HAS TURNED UP....
BANQUET IN HONOUR OF EPICUS TONIGHT
LOOKS LIKE WE WERE EXPECTED
YOU PUT THAT KNIFE IN ME AND..
AND WHAT?
FLAP
VALERIAN LOUER
GUSH
SNICK SNAK
WE MUST WITHDRAW! WE CAN'T FIGHT THE ENTIRE FEAST
THAT ARCH LOOKS LIKE AN EXIT
DEADEND ON THE RIGHT
OH NO! NOT MORE FOOD! WE'LL HAVE TO GET PAST A IT
RUMBLE TRUNDLE
IT'S MOVING!
GLOPH OBBG
AND GLOPHING!
AND OBBGING!
DJMRMK (CONCEALED DOOR NOISE)
WE HAVE NO CHOICE!....
KILL IT!
EAT IT!
EVADE IT!
STAB STAB
CHOMP CHOMP
STOP IT!
HIDE HIDE
YOU BEFOUL THE YOK-SHAH PUD OF EPICUS
ESEYAHH
GOT TO MAKE A FUSS, HAVEN'T YOU
OK, WHERE'S DA GRUB?
AHH! THE DELECTABLE WOWSER
THE MIGHTY EPICUS MANIFESTS!
ER.. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE WINE LIST?
MMM QUITE GOOD!
NEXT: THE LAST SUPPER??

FIGURES FRONT



By Martyn Tetlow & Mike Willis

FRONT LINE:

Grenadier models UK Ltd. have been in effective existence since early 1985. Its creation came about as the result of a determination by Grenadier Inc., a U.S. company, to expand its interests in Britain and Europe. Recognising their own lack of experience in this area, Grenadier approached their British agents and importers, **Games Of Liverpool**, with the suggestion that they cooperate in establishing a new company to manufacture and distribute Grenadier products in Europe. GoL generously provided facilities and personnel whilst Grenadier supplied product and expertise. The fledgling company, soon to be called Grenadier Models UK Ltd., was independent of both Games and Grenadier Inc. It was hatched above the Games shop in Birkenhead in January 1985, with a staff of two. These were *Doug Cowie*, (of **Imagine** magazine notoriety) on secondment from GoL, assisted by his wife *Anne*.

Casting began on a trial-and-error basis, a ladle in one hand and a 'Lern yerself casting' manual in the other. Results were better than anyone had a right to anticipate.

In February, a significant addition to the staff was made when *Mal Green*, ex Games Centre shop manager and briefly a GoL employee, joined as caster, packer and *general factotum*. Mal soon proved his adaptability, taking all aspects of manufacturing in his stride, and displaying a fine talent for organisation and improvisation along the way.

Grenadier UK now employs 12 people, with plans for expansion in the near future. They have moved to a purpose-built factory unit outside Chester, and have increased their production capacity enourmously in the intervening time.

Doug Cowie, having left GoL in the summer of '85, is managing director, whilst the versatile Mal Green now rejoices in the title of general manager, although he can still be found casting or packing when things get hectic.

A major policy development coincided with the move to Deeside; *Nick Lund*, ex proprietor of the much-lamented **Chronicle Miniatures** company, and more recently doyen of the **Citadel** design team, was lured into joining Grenadier by the usual promise of wealth and superb working conditions. This resulted in the first of Grenadier's British designed ranges; a superb collection of Dwarves, quickly followed by War Trolls. Grenadier UK, now established as one of the top few British companies, export a substantial portion of their output, and intend developing that market to the fullest. Their intentions are to continue the manufacture of Grenadier Inc's line, including figures for **Call Of Cthulhu, Dragon Lords, Middle Earth** and **Fantasy Lords,** whilst developing a comprehensive range of British designed figures as well. There is a marked difference in inter-Atlantic styles of figure design; American designers have a subtlety and flair for fine detail, whereas the British produce figures oozing with character, animation and innovation. Grenadier UK are fortunate in that they can call on the talents of leading exponents of both styles.

Next Issue: Citadel Miniatures, the giant of British miniatures.

BACK TO FRONT:

Regarding **Timothy Reed's** query about types of paint: As Martyn commented in his reply, I like to use gouache, especially **Windsor & Newton,** because of the huge variety of true "artists" colours available. They have one disadvantage, however, in that they are not waterproof and will run when wet. This problem can be cured by mixing them either with acrylic paints or with **Rowney** acrylic medium, which is colourless and available in gloss or matt form. Water colours and poster paints can also be waterproofed using the same method.

Philip Law of Marlborough wrote in, chastising us for not showing any SF models. The reason is, Philip, that we deal with a different figure manufacturer each issue, and so far, none of these have made a substantial number of SF figures, but rest assured, we will be showing some *soon*.

EFFECTIVE HAIR COLOURING:

Base Colour	Ink Wash	Highlights
light brown	nut brown	light brown
"	"	yellow
yellow	"	very pale yellow
dark brown	thin black	medium brown
blue	"	medium blue
grey	"	white
white	Cobalt blue	pale blue / white
light brown	dark red	orange
dark orange	nut brown	pale orange

UP FRONT:

There is more than one way to paint a minature figure and it is up to the individual to discover what suits his or her own style best. It is, however, important to follow a set pattern as this reduces the possibility of making mistakes. I personally prefer to use a combination of paints, including acrylics, designers gouache and drawing ink, but the following guide applies equally to other mediums. I'm assuming also that the figure is human; other races would be painted in appropriate colours such as green for goblins, black for orcs, etc.

FACES

Always start with the face; if you make a mess of this part it will spoil the whole figure regardless of how well painted the rest is. First, paint the whole area with a basic flesh colour (either ready mixed or a combination of white, scarlet and yellow ochre) then the lips using flesh with a little scarlet added. When this is dry, apply a wash of brown ink or thinned brown paint and it will flow into natural lines and hollow out the face thereby emphasising the features. The eyeballs can now be painted white followed by an appropriate colour (blue, green, grey, etc.) for the irises. It is important that the irises both look the same way, and that they cover the full depth of the eyeball, otherwise the figure will look cross-eyed or staring. To define the shape of the eye paint a very fine brown line along the eyelids top and bottom. If you wish to experiment a little, try a wash of apple green or crimson ink over the white eyeball to give an 'evil' look. Next, using a light flesh colour, apply highlights to upper cheekbones, under the eyes, the bridge of the nose, the nostrils, the chin and the forehead over the eyes followed by a thin wash of brown to blend the whole together. Any other areas of exposed flesh such as hands, arms, legs and torso can be painted using this same technique, highlights being applied to the fingers and the areas of muscle.

HAIR

The next step is to paint the hair of the figure, including any facial hair such as eyebrows and beards. For this I find that drawing ink is especially acceptable, since it emphasises the texture without clogging the detail. Apply the ink over a suitable base colour and then apply highlights by dry brushing with a lighter shade of the original colour. Many different effects can be achieved by using a small variety of inks and undercoats - try experimenting and see what results you can achieve.

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READERS' LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DAVE MEADOWS, Sunderland: Issue 3 at last! I thought you'd given up or gone out of business or... hey, nice cover! "Occult issue?" Oh well, might as well give the Christian lunatic fringe another excuse for a dig at us. Now, what's this first article... no! I don't believe it! After 4 years of waiting and hoping- a **Stormbringer** scenario! Its good, no its brilliant! I think you've just redefined heaven. And there's more, the whole magazine is just as good. Looks like these guys have finally got their act together. Only one problem: there's only one way to go once you've reached the top...

I thought that was rather a large helping of praise for one letters page, which brings us nicely to the criticism:

▼

NIC COATES, Northumberland: I must take issue with Wendy Graham's article "Voyages Beyond"; SF has been trying for years to lose the 'rockets & guns' image built up mainly by the American pulp magazines and championed by one Hugo Gernsback, inventor of the term 'Scientifiction' and its derivative 'Sci-Fi', which has come to represent the narrow minded view of the genre that Wendy Graham's article reinforces. There is more to SF than hardcore, which Wendy either doesn't realise, or she is so convinced (as Gernsback was) that her favourite authors are best that she doesn't want anyone to find out: mentioning Star Trek without mentioning Harlan Ellison is verging on the criminal.

I expect the majority of **Adventurer's** readers aren't newcomers to SF and recognise the article's tunnel vision; the only useful definition of SF that I've ever come across is Norman Spinrad's "Science fiction is anything published as science fiction."

NICK EDWARDS, Bristol: As a zine editor, I was mildly curious to read **Fanzines Forever.** I don't know what the rest of your readership thought of it, but I was bored silly by the entire article. **Alex** and **Ben** should realise that endless reviews are very tedious even to people who know about fandom, moreso to those who don't. Although in favour of a column dealing with fandom, I would ask Alex and Ben to seriously rethink their approach to it. I think a better idea would be to feature the best of fandom articles to show what zines are capable of.

▼

CHRIS BAYLIS, Essex: I feel that you are doing yourself an injustice, and wasting your money by reproducing the front page as a "poster". Issue 3s picture was appallingly boring as a poster. It looked quite good on the cover, but hadn't enough character or interest as a centre page.

▼

DAVE PERRY, Liverpool Christianity has never been slow to persecute anything it doesn't understand. If role-playing had been around during the middle ages, no doubt we would have all been burnt at the stake. Role-playing gives people a forum for expression, a chance for them to explore new concepts and ideas, and to see life from many different angles. To a bigot who has been raised not to question his faith, such a thing must be abhorrent. in my view, much of religion is based on superstition, which in turn is based on ignorance.

I find it curious the way arguments develop; Dave's defence of role-playing games has quickly reverted to a general attack on religion. This aggressive approach, if taken as the 'official response' of the gaming world would surely add fuel to the fire.

▼

DANIEL ROBERTS, Wirral: I am an active member of the Christian faith and at the same time play RPGs. I play these for FUN, and not to become a full-blooded, mindless devil-worshipper. Games do contain elements of evil, but they are not essential parts of the game. However, the notion that RPGs can provoke violence, I sadly have to agree with; there tends to be a lot of emphasis on blood and gore in a lot of games and scenarios. The worst examples of this are probably the 'fighting fantasy' style books, designed for young children.

▼

ANDREW MEEK, W. Sussex: Since I'm a recently converted Christian, perhaps I might put my view forward: Firstly, role gaming as a type of entertainment is fine- there is nothing wrong with the basic principles. True, some people use it as a way of 'copping out' of life, but its a lot better than some ways (eg. drug addiction). Secondly, a lot of RPGs have no occult reference at all (I defy anyone to find one in Bunnies & Burrows. Also free of occult references are super hero games, TOON, the spy genre and SF rpgs). The question to ask though, is "are occult references dangerous?" Certainly, they are not universally corrupting, as some would make out. People reading background or rule books do not jump up and off to the local satanic mass, do they? I'd say the danger starts when a referee is specifically looking for an authentic occult angle for his campaign, and starts talking to those who 'know'. It would be extremely foolish to explore far in this direction.

ANNE MACEY, Gwent: If I may, I would like your permission to shove your answer under the noses of those who link role-playing with devil worship (any self respecting halfling runs away and hides if demons are mentioned). Perhaps they would like to talk to the catholic priest in Cardiff who plays D&D, or the vicar from the valleys who runs a MERP campaign. Anyway, I shall certainly quote from your very clear and explicit answer in the future.

We are still receiving comments on the suitability of generic or systemless scenarios by the score, with passionate views on both sides of the debate:

▼

PAUL GODDARD, Northumbria: No matter how good a scenario is, much of it will have to be changed by the GM to suit his campaign and style of play, therefore the system used in the scenario is not of overwhelming importance. What is important is that the system (if any) remains constant each issue, thereby enabling GMs to become accustomed to the type of reworking necessary.

Role-playing games fall roughly into 3 categories; Sword & Sorcery, modern adventure and Science Fiction. Of these, the first two are the most popular, and it is not unreasonable to expect the majority of scenarios to be written for them. I would therefore suggest that AD&D be used as a basis for sword & sorcery, and Call of Cthulhu be used for the modern type. AD&D is easy enough to adapt (for anybody remotely familiar with the system), and the plot lines of a CoC adventure is admirably suitable for a game of the Superheroes genre. These are the two most popular games of their type, and by using these systems, it would be hoped to please most of the people most of the time. Players of other games might resent this point of view, but it is unreasonable to expect every game to be catered for specifically, and any referee who cannot easily adapt a scenario should stick to Monopoly.

Of course, to ignore other types and styles of games would be unfair and I am not suggesting this, but perhaps if each scenario was accompanied by supportive articles; eg. general information about life in the 1920s or medieval society, it would enable referees of all systems to build a realistic backdrop to their campaigns. For example, some facts on feudalism would be equally useful for players of Star Trek or Traveller and Merp, it only needs the referee to interpret them in a manner pertaining to that particular game.

Many of you have suggestions as to the way ADVENTURER should be developing in terms of content; These are the sort of ideas I like to receive; it helps me know exactly what you want to see, as well as letting me know what you do or don't like about our magazine.

▼

ANDY KING, Newcastle: Theme issues are a good idea, providing you avoid the old chestnuts such as ninjas. How about a Stormbringer special, or a DYING EARTH theme? Alternatively, what about an in-depth look at magic? Also, how about a campaign world along the lines of PELINORE, or something developing backgrounds generally? Finally, how about some stuff on wargaming, such as Warhammer?

▼

IAN CLEGG, Stalybridge: There does appear to be a marked lack of wargame (non role-playing) reviews/ads. As it is, I'm interested in PBM games as well as wargames, and will be following Wayne's articles with great interest. But you are "The Superior Fantasy & Science Fiction Games Magazine", so please, more wargames!

▼

OWEN "GRENDL" WHITTHEAD, Barnsley: You have taken another step in the right direction by introducing a regular PBM column. Top marks to the omnipresent and anonymous Wayne for his extremely informative opening article. You are the first professional magazine to pay more than a passing mention to this exciting form of role playing.

▼

RICH MUMFORD, Harrogate: Personally, I like ONCE BITTEN. Agreed, it is chaotic, hard to follow, but is all the better for it. The humour is a lot more subtle than some strips which rely on endless mutilation and sexist cliches which they seem to think makes it funny.

▼

MIKE WILLIS, Lancs: I enjoyed "Horrific Routes" by Dave Lock- as a comparative newcomer to horror fiction, it is useful to have some 'recommended reading'. Dave commented that he was still researching "Psychic Detectives"- perhaps he would be interested in two more examples of the genre that he didn't mention; Dr. John Silence appeared in a short story entitled "A Physical Invasion" by Algernon Blackwood, who also wrote "The Wendigo" of CoC fame. This story appears in an old paperback collection of Blackwood stories entitled "The Dance Of death".

There is also a character called **Morris Klaw**, who was created in the 1920s by Sax Rohmer (famous for one of his other creations, Dr. Fu Manchu). His tales are collected in a volume called *"The Dream Detective"* which, I think, is printed in the USA. There is a short article on Sax Rohmer and a Morris Klaw story reprinted in Sleuth Times volume 3(1).

Incidentally, one of the stories Dave mentioned, "Casting The Runes", was made into the well-known supernatural thriller *"Night Of The Demon"*, starring Dana Andrews and Peggy Cummins.

▼

NEIL GRANT, Mid-Glam: "Horrific Routes" was a very good article, but I would hesitate ro suggest ripping off whole plots- it only needs one player to recognise or have read them and you are in trouble. What I prefer to do is borrow images and/or ideas and write them into my own scenarios. then, players who **think** they recognise the plot are in for a nasty surprise.

What a devious mind some referees have, Neil. Not that you would purposely mislead your players, of course.

▼

NEIL GRANT: Fire On High part 2 was even better than part 1. I seem to remember that the idea of the wizard becoming a little older and weaker with each spell was used quite effectively in one of the **Sinbad** films- played by Tom Baker, I think. However, I don't know whether the entropy effect would be necessarily harmful- it should be totally unpredictable, and could cause good, bad or both effects. Some spell-casters might actually try to PROMOTE entropy! **(you are a devious so-and-so, Neil!)** I disagree with Clint Redwood (LBTS, #3) when he says that a spellcaster must obtain a deity's backing to cast a spell; D&D clerics or RQ rune-priests may, but most true magic is powered by forces from *within* the spellcaster, not from external powers.

Aha! That's why you're so devious- you're a renegade halfling wizard, sent to enlighten ADVENTURER's letters page!

▼

ROGER WINTERBOTTOM, Wardle: Isn't it amazing that everytime anyone mentions the word "ADVENTURER", it appears in thick type. Watch- egg, orange, banana, ADVENTURER, cabbage. Strange, isn't it?

Finally, an apology to readers who couldn't quite fathom 'Mylakhrion The Immortal' last issue- the first two columns on page 40 were swapped around by gremlins who, ever-present in ADVENTURER's offices, plague us with £ signs instead of # signs, steal page numbers and swap photographs of games in the Shop Window pages. I dare say they've been at work again this issue, mixing words up and $#@@£∂å´©ƒΣœæ©£¢ etcetera...

See you next time, Ste Dillon.

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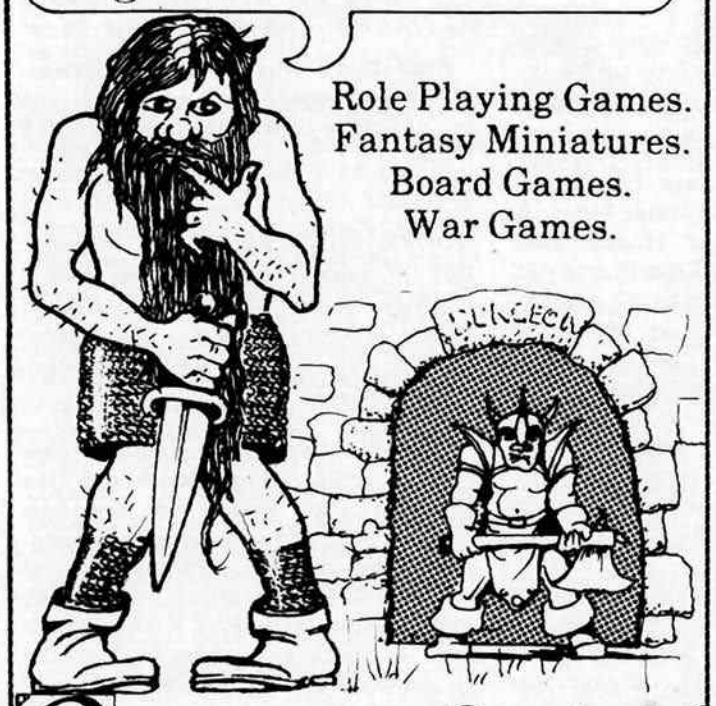

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The boxed set provides solid basic play mechanics that were over 2 years in playtesting. Rules provided for modern firearms, NBC weapons and protections, mutations, survival, high technology and more. The game allows the referee to decide the nature of the holocaust that destroyed the world in which play will occur.
Aftermath is for 2-6 players and a referee. It is a role playing excursion into a post holocaust world.

Rich Crawley: As an overworked GM, I am given to forgetting to keep track of time. One solution to this oversight is to have all encounters occuring at a particular time of day, but then everyone rushes to put their armour on as late afternoon arrives. A more serious solution is the *play-school* style cardboard clock attached to the referee's screen. An alternative to this would be to make four 14" square pieces of card, as indicators, to overlay onto a clock/ calendar chart. A small blob of blu-tac may help keep the indicator on the chart. Moveable sunset/sunrise indicators would also be useful.

Note to Overseas Readers: We have a great many readers overseas who wish to subscribe to **Adventurer**, or join the *Adventurer Club*. It would be greatly appreciated if you would write to us first, asking about postage costs, etc. Alternatively, we could tell you where you can subscribe to Adventurer in your own country.

An alternative Hit Points system for Runequest, by D. reynolds and the 'White Lady': It appears to me that Characters of the same race in *Runequest* can have an incredible variety of bone/flesh strength; some marrows snap like twigs, yet others have the resilience of iron. Since hit-points represent the amount of damage an individual location or a character's total body can take before being broken or causing death, this is a rather disturbing anomaly. I would think that all 'people' have (roughly) the same bone-breaking point. Let us assume that most average characters have between 10-15 body HPs, with stronger or weaker characters having only a slight adjustment for STR or SIZ:

X =STR+SIZ/2	Total Hit Points:	
3≤X≤8	9+1d4	Body location hit pts. are calculated as normal.
9≤X≤15	12+1d4	
16≤X≤21	15+1d4	

This gives a range of between 10 and 19 HPs, a more acceptable difference in my opinion.

'WHAT IS PLAY BY MAIL?'

BY WAYNE BOOTLEG

I have been playing play by mail games for just over four years now and have tried and tested many. Some have been good and some have been bad, but I have always played one on a regular basis, **"Saturnalia".**

There is something about this game that appeals to me personally; a combination of factors which, unlike some games, do not tie you down to a set course of actions. The word that comes to mind is *freedom.* Let me explain:-

Combat ability: A measure of your offensive and defensive weapon skill.
Magic power: A measure of your ability to cast and resist magic.
Vitality: A definition of your character's health (i.e. 0 vitality = death, 500 vitality = exceptional healthy living).
Scouting ability: A measure of your stealth (climbing and opening locks etc.).
Perception: Gauges your ability to spot out - of - place objects.

When you create your character, you must allocate between 20-80 points to each ability. For each further round you play, your character will receive a further 50 points to distribute over your 5 abilities, with a maximum of 40 points per ability. With this character you are set loose on one of the 8 main islands of Saturnalia to explore it's dangerous world.

The first thing you discover is that when you do something which calls upon your major abilities, your points total goes down!! For example, you engage an orc in combat and you lose c.a., you get wounded and lose vitality. These losses are decided by the G.M., dependent on dice rolls as well as the situation. Magic spells are fairly easy to pick up at the various temples you may visit. However, an overiding factor to aquiring them is the god you worship, and this is one of the most interesting parts of the game. You see, there are 14 gods in Saturnalia and they all like/dislike each other to varying degrees, ranging from "highly likes" to "hates". For example **Renchu** (god of death) and **Corgul** (god of law and knowledge) hate each other and will see to it that their worshippers on the world will strive to do as much damage as possible, whilst **Dianodus** (god of balance) will try to see that neither takes the upper hand!!

You will also find that you have total freedom of movement. If collecting detailed maps is your thing, you can move anything between 6 to 25 hexes per turn dependent on your mode of travel, but if you want to get from A to B (200 miles away), you just put this on your turn sheet and barring bad dice rolls, you will get there in one piece.

One important point I must mention is the "fame" system, which is used to create a top ten player list. The point is that if you are a goodie, you strive to achieve positive fame, which means that you are renowned for heroic deeds, eg. helping old people across busy streets, rescuing damsels in distress and killing dragons. However, if you are a baddie, you strive to achieve minus fame, which means you are known for evil deeds, eg. pushing old people under wagons as they cross the street, kidnapping damsels and keeping them in distress, as well as helping dragons kill goodies. Fame is dished out by the G M s for all sorts of reasons and is easy to achieve at first, but gets harder as your fame gets higher. Of course, neutrals get a combination of plus and minus fame as they do both good and bad deeds.

I find the GM descriptions, atmosphere and quality of a high standard. There is also a regular monthly newsletter, plenty of "sati-meets" (where players get together, drink lots of beer and swap information), lots of organisations to join and of course, all the entertaining players' messages that you receive.

Finally, the helpful hints:

•Set yourself an objective before you start (i.e. try to become the most famous/richest/evil/heroic character).
•Worship a god from round one (Renchu is a good one)
•Avoid a character called **"Coup De Gra"** like the plague. He is the most evil character in the world and unless you worship an evil god, he will slaughter you, no questions asked!

For more details about "Saturnalia" ,Write to:- Sloth Enterprises,
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Mention **Adventurer** and Sloth will send you a free start-up plus two free rounds!!
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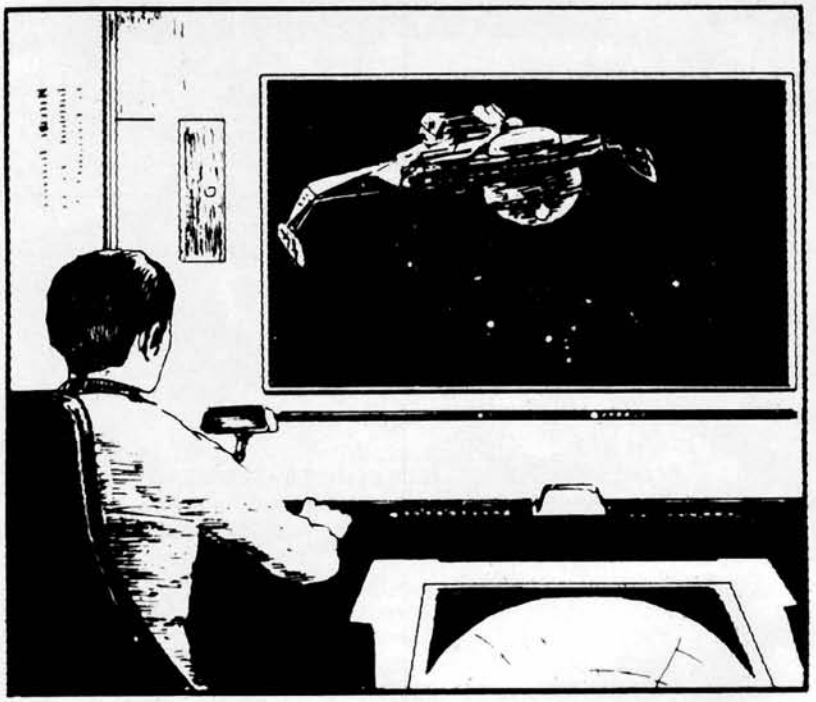
Wayne Elusive



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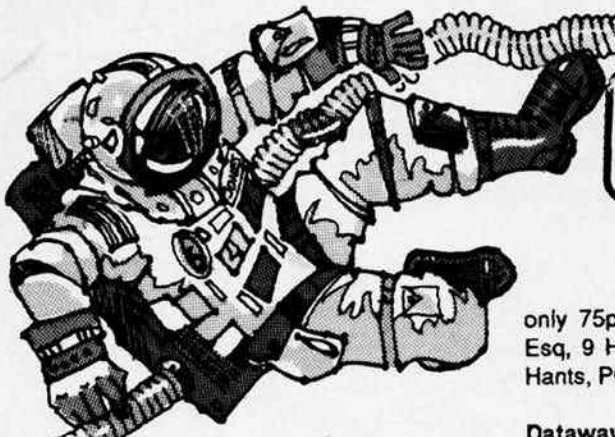

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UNEARTHED at last- The Tome Of Incomprehensibility- alias SPECTRAL VISION issue 2, a 40-sided AD&D fanzine. A copy of which can be yours for only 75p (inc. P+P) from Mark McLean Esq, 9 Hill Walk, Nashe Way, Fareham, Hants, PO15 6NF.

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BIRMINGHAM City centre role-players club. Tuesdays 7-10:30; AD&D, CoC, GH and others. Cheap (20p per session), licensed premises, first visit free. Contact Simon Burley 021-471-1749

GOOLE roleplaying society meets Tuesdays and Sundays. C&S, MERP, two AD&D campaigns, Space Opera and more. First two meetings free. No age limit, but reasonable level of common sense, etc. preferred. Contact Shaun Clarkson on GOOLE 2816

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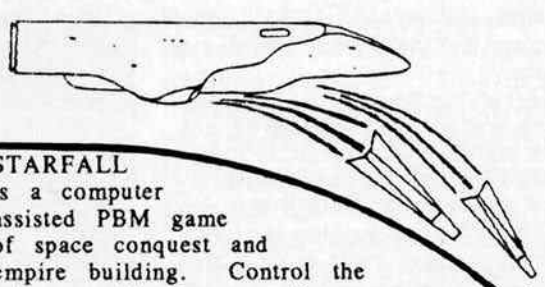

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FANZINES FOREVER...?

BY BEN GOODALE & ALEX BARDY

Still with us are you? Don't worry, a few more issues and you'll know what we're talking about!

We'll kick off this time with a bit of news. Someone called **Nick Edwards** has come up with the idea of an APA zine especially for aspiring writers/editors.

For the uninitiated, an APA zine is one where the contributor supplies the editor with a camera-ready copy of what they want printed (complete with art, letraset, etc), as well as a couple of quid to cover printing costs of their particular bit. This works out as a cheap way of trying out 'editing'. In **HYPERACTIVE**, Nick and a few others will also be offering advice to those who contribute, in an attempt to improve their writing style. If you think you could do with this sort of assistance, get in touch with Nick. Alternatively, all zines are eager for contributions, and the letters pages reflect peoples reactions to them.

The summer is a notorious time for new zine production, and this one is no exception. We have five to mention this time, and no doubt more will make an appearance before **Adventurer** #5 hits the streets. **Floating World** arrived just too late for last time. This is a zine dedicated to games produced by **Fantasy Games Unlimited**. Inside there are a variety of contents, including reviews, scenarios and some dreadful fiction. Overall, quite a good first issue, but only worth getting if you are a FGU enthusiast. The **Turbo Turkey Maintenance Manual** describes itself as a *'Comic, RPG, Fantasy and SF Fanzine'*. This describes it pretty well. It has two (mediocre) cartoons (one based on Michael Moorcock's **'Hawklords'** books), a Marvel Superheroes scenario, fiction and other stuff. It's a nice light read. **The Zine With No Name** (also the name of the another zine, so it is to be re-named **JAWKS** for issue 2!) is full of standard AD&D stuff, with an interesting scenario, a new character class, an article on encumberance, coupled with waffle and music. Really one for people wanting AD&D coverage, and fans of prog. rock! **Holy Avenger** contains two large-ish scenarios, for AD&D and CoC respectively, which both look quite interesting. The remaining few pages are taken up with a review and some chat. This one is only worth getting if you want the scenarios, since there is little else.

The 'recommended' first issue this time is **Eliminator,** which is actually a re-mix of the editor's former zine, **Hits To Kill.** Eliminator is a great improvement over its predecessor, with the promise of discursive articles, PBM games, letters and some humour. Presentation is good, showing the editor's prior experience. Issue 1 is free, but by the time you read this #2 will be out at 35p.

Our theme this issue is that of **RPG campaign worlds**, a popular theme in fandom:

Fanzine Package:

The Adventurer 'zine package offered last issue has been a great success to date, but due to this surge of popularity, there were supply problems. To overcome this problem, we will not promise a specific selection of 'zines, to prevent last minute changes causing complaints and embarrassments. Suffice it to say, the pack will contain 5 of the best fanzines currently available. This costs just £2.50, including p&p, and we think this is the best way of obtaining a 'first taste' of fandom. Just send a P.O. or cheque for £2.50 made payable to Ben Goodale at the address below.

The first one is that of **'Gencarvea'**, from the pages of **Cerebral Cortex**. It seems to be coming along quite nicely, with articles on it each issue, albeit short ones. **Tyrone** is trying to turn it into a complete RPG system and world ala Runequest's **Glorantha**. At the rate he is going, it'll be a long time before it's finished, so why not take a look and perhaps help him out. Besides which, the rest of the zine is very readable, so you might find something of interest...

Sacrificing The Goat's 'Urtia' is still a fledgeling, and thus is worth looking at so as to be in at the beginning. It shows some promise, and if a little more of the zine is turned over to it, it could be quite something. Certainly the editor shows an intention to make a go of it.

For all you Superhero fans, **Superhero UK** is constantly providing settings for campaigns, and #12 details an interesting one.

Sound & Fury was running a campaign called **'Phaedra'**, which was supposed to run until issue #4, but #4 itself contains barely a mention of it. Phaedra is not a complete world, but it was never intended to be, since the editor only wanted to give the basic outline, with the rest to be developed by the GM - in this it has done a good job. What **James** *has* done of the world is worth looking at, though the way he has tried to cram in specific areas for different RPG's is just slightly OTT. If you have time to develop a campaign from a basic outline, then this is well worth a look (provided you can get hold of S&F #1, since James has sold out)

Now we come to what is in our opinion the best fantasy system-campaign around in fandom at the moment; **Telegraph Road's 'Galadra'** system. This has got less than twelve issues behind it, and ever since the change of name from **Demons Drawl,** the zine has dedicated itself to trying to produce the 'Ultimate RPG'. A tall order perhaps, but it looks like it will make a good go of it. It seems that all the readers are optimistic of the zine achieving this goal, and indeed if you are not interested in Galadra then it's hardly worth buying the zine, though most material could be used in other campaigns. The whole thing is neatly done, though somewhat erroneously put together, and above all is both useable and believable. This summer a booklet will be put together detailing all the past writings on Galadra, so that no-one misses out. If you feel like helping out with (or following) just one campaign design system, then this is it.

Finally, one campaign/system currently being put through it's paces is based on the **Riverworld** books by **Philip Jose Farmer**, and appears in Ben's own **Utter Drivel**. Issue #4 details how to run a game, with ideas on it, whilst Issue #5 will feature the last 'regular' article on it, though there should be more sometime soon... but that's another story...

RELEVANT ADDRESSES:

Alex Bardy, 28b Gladsmuir Road, Archway, London, N19 3JX
(Editor of **Eh?**, #7 now out @ 40p - PBM/Chat)
Ben Goodale, Cairnmore, Crianlarich, Perthshire, FK20 8QS
(Editor of **Utter Drivel**, #5 now out @ 60p - FRP/Chat)
Sacrificing The Goat: (30p, 40 A5pp)
Mark Jones, 16 Orchard Green, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7DT
Sound & Fury: (60p, 40 A5pp)
James Wallis, The Manor House, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 6LL
Telegraph Road : (60p, 40 A5pp)
Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4QH
Hyperactive: Nick Edwards, Cherry Lea, Wells Road, Bristol, Avon, BS18 8NE
Floating World: (50p, 40 A5pp)
Russ Henry, 75 Birkdale Road, Hartburn, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS18 5JT
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STARTING YOUR OWN FANZINE?

by James Wallis

I think I can accurately guess the thoughts of a few people out there. You've just finished reading the fanzine column and an idea is beginning to form in the crypts of your mind. **"Hey, this looks fun. Why don't I start a fanzine?"** and this is where I step in with a friendly word of warning. The word of warning is **"STOP!"**

(Already a few of you will be muttering "Who is this **Wallis** guy? Doesn't **SOUND & FURY** only have four issues under its belt?" Okay, so **S&F's** still young but I've been involved in fandom since1982- longer than most current 'zine editors. During that time, my first fanzine **"WEREMAN"** notched up nine issues. I'm not the most qualified person to speak, but I'll do.)

So, why **shouldn't** you edit a fanzine? Well, how much do you know about them? Did you see the series of articles in **Imagine** on how to edit fanzines? So did lots of people. As a result the fanzine field is currently very crowed, with over 60 'zines at last reckoning, and more are coming in than are going out. The market can't support them all: the old days that **Mike Lewis** wrote about were fine, when **Dragonlords** was shifting over a thousand copies per issue, but these days the market's too crowded and a good 'zine will be lucky to sell 250 copies.

People have argued that bad 'zines will drop out quickly since nobody will buy them, but editors' egos being what they are, it seems unlikely. Besides, most fanzines run at loss anyway so financial pressure is unlikely to stop them - but more about that later.

If you're still interested, what are your motives for starting a fanzine? Do you want people to look up to you at conventions, to be able to hob-nob it with **Ian Livingstone** and **Gary Gygax?** Yes? Get a job with **TSR** or **Games Workshop**, but don't start a fanzine. Fanzine editors are the lowest form of life, second only to rot-grubs, maggots and writers of solo gamebooks. Do you want to raise some spare pocket money from your fanzine? Not a hope- you'll probably make no profit at all, and if you do then the time you put in on the fanzine will outweigh any money you might make. Are you deeply and passionately involved with role-playing games? Read on Macduff.

Have you got what it takes to write a fanzine? Make no mistake, it's the editor that does most of the writing, and if you can't write then your proposed 'zine is going to be bad. Don't try writing for **White Dwarf** or **Adventurer** to start with; most fanzine editors and hacks are already trying to sell them stuff and your article would be lost. Try writing for a 'zine or two -but make sure you're submitting your work to the right 'zine; don't send hardware to **Imazine** or chat to **Balrog Banter.**

Eventually, one of your articles will be printed. Rejoice, and write another one. If you're prolific, you'll get forty pages of your work printed within two years. You can now sit back and reflect that if you'd kept those articles (not the bad ones) you'd have had enough material for a fairly good issue.

Can you type? Have you got a decent typewriter ? Can you, or a friend, draw? Layout is becoming increasingly important if a 'zine is going to succeed. Do you know somewhere that does cheap printing? If not, getting your 'zine printed is going to cost a lot. Most 'zines don't make a profit of any kind, and once you add up all the advertising, postage, publicity, free copies for friends, shops' commisions and so on, you may be running at a big loss. If you can't afford it, then don't bankrupt yourself trying.

Hey!- Don't think I'm smashing your dreams. There are alternatives to editing a fanzine! For a start, you may find that writing articles for a' zine is a lot of fun, especially if you get your own column or sub-zine.

There are **APAs** -amateur press associations- which are like communal fanzines and are great fun too. Finally , if you still want to edit a fanzine, but think you might not be able to survive in the big bad world of fandom, you can always start the way I did; by editing a local zine with a small print run, possibly as part of a club. It's a very good way to give the 'zine a dry run - if it flops or you loss interest after a couple of issues then you don't get too hurt and if it succeeds then you can launch it nationwide.

Fanzines are fine to start but they're a lot of hard work to keep going. I would never begrudge anyone the right to start their own, but I feel everyone should be warned that it's a full time job, leaving very little time for working, eating, sleeping or role-playing.

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What Killed Cotranden?

By Hilary Robinson

They gathered in an unspeaking, uneasy circle around the body of the dragonrider. He had not moved since his mount landed in the courtyard, scrawking to attract attention. Only the safety harness held him as he lay limp across the dragon's neck, his long black hair covering his face as if in respect.

"Is he dead?" somebody whispered. No one answered, and no one dared touch the black-leather clad figure. The ranks parted silently to allow **Quendar** access. Gently he brushed back the hair from the ice-cold face of **Rymur's** heir. The prince had only become a dragonrider three months before. Quendar did not search for a pulse or send for the court physician. He had looked death in the face often enough to recognise it. With his own features like those of the dead youth, Quendar released **Cotranden** from the harness, slid his feet from the stirrups and lifted him bodily into his arms, turning towards the audience chamber.

"Rymur will kill him," somebody whispered, and his companion nodded.

Quendar had walked up the audience chamber on many an occasion, over the intricate mosaic floor depicting the exploits of Rymur's sorcerer ancestors, but never before had the walk seemed so long and so difficult. The low buzz of conversation had ceased the instant he crossed the threshold, as though the entire court held its breath in shock. Quendar kept his eyes fixed on the portly, middle-aged man on the ebony throne and saw Rymur's puzzled expression change to horror as he recognised the figure in Quendar's arms. As Quendar approached the foot of the wide steps, Rymur was on his feet, his face white with anger and shock.

" Have you killed my son, Dragonlord?" The vioce had a hysterical edge to it.

"My Liege -"

"Set him down. SET HIM DOWN!" Rymur's voice shrieked up the scale. Quendar bent to obey.

" I didn't want him anywhere near those hell-spawned creatures of yours! You ENCOURAGED him to rebel against my wishes and now he's dead! DEAD!! And so are you, Dragonlord!" A blast of pure white energy shot from Rymur's hand and struck Quendar in the shoulder, hurling him backwards onto the mosaic floor. His twitching, jerking body was driven some distance before the white fire stopped. Smoke rose from the clothes on his right side and there was the sickening smell of burning flesh. Rymur sagged weakly, drained by the unchecked outpouring of energy, and let himself fall back into the ebony throne. " Take him away and throw him over the wall."

For a moment no one moved, then two of Quendar's archers approached the sqrawled figure of the man they had all thought invincible, and lifted him.

"Over the wall" , Rymur insisted. " Then come back and tell me you've done it."

Within a few minutes the two young men were back.

"As My Liege commanded", one said, his face white.

"Good, good." Rymur was pale himself and shivering, and spilling a good deal of the potion the physician was trying to encourage him to drink. The two archers backed out of the royal presence. They had done as they were bid. They had come back and told Rymur that they had done it. But they lied.

Quendar lay hovering between life and death while the barber-surgeon's apprentice amputated the blackened remains of his right arm. It was the worst thing the youngster had ever had to do and he was ill afterwards, but **Daken** had been afraid to ask the boy's master. He knew the boy admired Quendar and his dragons and hoped he could be trusted to hold his tongue.

"If you don't, Rymur will probably cut it out," Daken told the green-faced apprentice.

"I know what I've done," the boy said angrily. " You dragonriders think you're the only men around here."

Quendar's lieutenant smiled and clapped him on the shoulder. "You've proved there's at least one more. You have our gratitude, young **Ellis**. Would you be prepared to ride a dragon?"

"Me?"

"We have to get him out of here tonight before Rymur suspects anything, and I can't fly and hold him at the same time. If I put another saddle on my mount, could you ride behind me and hold him on?"

"Yes! But Daken...the ride...it could kill him."

"So will Rymur if he finds he's still here. He'll kill **Finn** and **Declan** too for bringing him into the stables instead of throwing him over the wall. And then he'll kill you for-"

"Enough." Ellis swallowed hard. "I withdraw my objections."

"I though you might...."

The ride was cold, bitterly cold and a sleeting northern wind buffeted the dragon and it's three riders. Ellis was chilled to the bone, even through the extra layers of clothing borrowed for him, but never once did he let go of the dead weight of the Dragonlord, wrapped in furs and tied between himself and Daken. He would have liked to ask where they were going, but the roaring air tore the breath from his lungs and he buried his face in the fur, more than relieved when at last they landed. Small hands were helping to untie Quendar.

"This is Ellis. He's the one who amputated the arm and did all the fancy bandaging."

" A very professional job, Ellis," the yellow-haired girl said.

"This is **Kiera**. She's - um - a friend of mine." Ellis pretended not to see Daken blush and Kiera give an impish smile. "She's also a healer." Ellis was interested. "Herbs and Things?"

"If you like I'll teach you."

"No! He has to go back tonight. If he were to be missed, there might be questions asked." Kiera nodded, looking down at the injured Dragonlord. "How could the king do such a dreadful thing to Lord Quendar, of all people, who's stood by him though all the border wars of the last decade?"

"It was the heat of the moment, Kiera. He was distraught about Cotranden. He'll be deeply distressed about 'killing' Quendar once he calms down. Within a week he'll be down on his knees in that draughty chapel confessing his sins to anyone who'll listen."

"A fat lot of good that will do!" Kiera sniffed. "What killed Cotranden, anyway?"

" I don't know. He was on the northern wing of the patrol and no one saw him get separated. They were late coming in because they'd been searching for him."

"Northern raiders?"

"Maybe. I don't know if he was wounded. Rymur took him away."

"Does the command of dragons fall on you now?"

"I suppose it does. I'd never have wanted it this way. Tell Quendar I'm only minding them for him until he can come back."

As if in response to his name, Quendar moved and made a soft sound. Kiera was beside the low bed instantly. "He's coming round. I don't think that's a good idea just yet." She glanced up along her shelf of jars and bottles. "Ellis, can you reach down the laudenum? It's the third or fourth from the right...quickly!"

Ellis scrambled to fetch the tiny bottle, bringing the third AND fourth. Each contained a colourless fluid. She glanced at the labels and took one. "He doesn't need that. Yet." Ellis looked at the label of the one she'd rejected. "What does that do?"

"Dissolves claws, hooves and horn if applied externally. Internally, one spoonful puts sick and injured animals to sleep. You needn't look so surprised. Healers have to recongnise when the suffering is beyond their power to cure."

You won't give it to Lord Quendar yet, but you might?"

"Only if he begged me to."

"He'll never do that," Daken declared.

"How would you know the limit of another man's endurance, Daken?" She flung at him. "Do you know the limits of yours? It's easy to be brave when you're not in pain. Ellis, put it down and raise his head a little and we'll see if we can persuade him to drink a little of this." She let the liquid trickle between the parted lips. Quendar's dark hair straggled damp across his forehead and she brushed it aside, looking into the aristocratic face, watching it relax again into sleep.

"We have to go," Daken said. She nodded. As they opened the door she looked round and pleaded, "Be careful, Daken. What ever killed Cotranden could still be out there."

He blew her a kiss and went out.

"Come on, come on, you idle lie-in-bed! There's work to be done!" A firm prod in the ribs with a soft boot rolled Ellis awake, convinced he had only that moment closed his eyes. "Master?"

"Work,work,work," said the barber-surgeon. "We must prepare the body of the young prince to lie in state."

"Ugh," Ellis said.

"Now, Ellis, that's not respectful. Somebody has to wash the body and make it look as handsome as possible."

"Why? All Cotranden ever wanted was to be treated as a dragonrider."

Daken was stunned by the order, total disbelief showing clearly on his open face. "Kill the dragons?" he repeated.

"All of them! I will not have a single one left in the kingdom! See to it, er-Dickon."

"But My Leige, the dragons are your best defence against the border raiders! from aloft the riders can see-"

"SILENCE" Rymur screamed. " How dare you defy me? Would you suffer the same fate as your lord?"

He raised his hand and Daken held his breath, prepared to die as Quendar had almost done. Rymur lowered his hand slowly. "Dragons are the work of the devil, and they killed my son. From this day forth there will be NO MORE DRAGONS in the high City."

Daken was dismissed, and as he turned away his eyes met those of the only man present whose expression was not one of shock at Rymur's edict, **Calleel**, General Calleel, whose resentment of Quendar had been no secret. Calleel was smiling. Daken tore his gaze away and strode down the hall, fists clenched and bootheels ringing on the marble. He felt ill, as if he himself had been responsible for betraying the Dragonlord

"He smells like an alehouse!"

"Ellis!"

"I beg your pardon, Master, but he does." Ellis was cutting away Cotranden's leather jacket since his limbs were by now too stiff to allow them to remove the heavy windproof clothing easily.

"It's not uncommon for the dragonriders to take a little drink before going aloft. It's very cold a-dragonback, you know."

Ellis knew, but wasn't about to say so. He also knew that the dragonriders drank sometimes, but Quendar would not have let anyone fly intoxicated.

He bit his lip. Would Quendar have known if Cotdranden was drunk on patrol?

"Besides," Fergan said, his back to the apprentice, "It smells as if he spilled more than he drank."

Between them they stripped the body and Fergan brought warm water and towels.

"Well, what are you thinking about now?"

"The only marks on him are bruises on his face, Master. What killed him?"

"The intense cold perhaps, if he was drunk and got careless."

"You mean he could have frozen to death on the wing?"

"It would account for the lack of injuries."

"Get everyone aloft," Daken said urgently, "and don't let anyone stop you. Fly to the Eastern State and you'll find a hamlet tucked in between the first and second ridges. Ask for Kiera the Healer."

"And then?"

"Then take your orders from the man you find there. Go!'

Ellis burst into the dragon caves as the first wing leapt skyward, leaving half a dozen of Calleel's men nursing bloody noses and cracked heads. Other dragonriders were pulling on their leather gear as they ran.

"Daken, I have to speak to you! Let me talk to the other riders of Cotranden's wing!"

"There isn't time!"

"It's important Daken!"

Daken reached out and caught the arm of a young man struggling into a leather jacket, spinning him round. "Talk to Ellis, Padraic."

"Who...?"

"What happened before you took off?" Ellis asked. "How much did Cotranden have to drink?"

"Drink?" Padraic said uncomfortably. He glanced at Daken but Daken only said, "Tell the boy the truth. This isn't a disciplinary matter. But don't take all day over it."

"We were in **The Lantern** as usual and we - ah - had a slight difference of opinion with some of Calleel's footsloggers. One of them deliberately knocked his beer over Cotranden's sleeve and Cotranden gave him a fat lip. Then another one broke a bottle over Cotranden's head and that's when we all piled in. After it was over, we shook hands and they offered us a drink. It was only one small glass each, Daken. I swear it," he added quickly, his hand placed on his heart.

"One glass of what?"

"Potcheen," Padraic admitted.

"Idiots," Daken said, but his condemnation went no further. "All right, Ellis?"

"Did Cotranden drink from the same bottle as the rest of you?"

"You only get six glasses from a bottle of potcheen. There was six of us. Cotranden said squeeze the bottle but they insisted on opening another one."

"Could it have been a bad brew?" Daken suggested

"That's possible," Ellis said. "How did Cotranden seem after it?"

"He had a huge lump on his head and was staggering a bit but after all, he had been walloped with a bottle."

"Did you go straight on patrol after that?" Daken asked.

"Yes. We reckoned if Quendar saw

him lurching about he'd assume he was drunk."

"How long before you lost sight of him?"

"About fifteen minutes. It began to rain and visibility was poor."

"Thanks, Padraic." Ellis turned to go.

"Ellis, wait - "

"You'd better get away, Daken. Come back at moonset. If there's a light on the eastern rampart, I have news. If not, I still won't know how he died. Bring Kiera."

"Kiera?"

The body of Cotranden of the High City lay in state on a bier strewn with alpie flowers. He wore velvet and silk, instead of the leather he preferred, and his long, blue-black hair was spread on the cream satin pillow, catching the light from a hundred candles. His hands were by his side, and Fergan had allowed some of the tiny blossoms to fall on the backs of his fingers, concealing the unpleasant discolouration of his nails. He had seen Ellis staring at the hands and did not want others to do likewise.

It was an hour before dawn. Rymur had spent the night on his knees beside the body of his dead son and was weary and dispirited. He had long since lost all his anger, not to mention any feeling in his legs. His back ached. The night was so long...

He had two other sons, fine, handsome young men, either of whom would rule well after him if anything happened to Cotranden. Quendar had said that Cotranden had more life in him than the other two put together, yet now he was dead. And Quendar was dead. And the dragons were gone. As if to balance the gift of sorcery, the Royal House of Rymur was cursed with an uncontrollable temper.

Cotranden had inherited it and so had the two younger sons. They had terrible murderous fights as children, always the younger two against the elder. Rymur intervened in their childish squabbles, recognising the demonic fury that resided within them. Suddenly he was filled with self-contempt for his treatment of Quendar who had served him loyally for nearly ten years. To reward such service with an agonising death was unworthy of a King. He would confess and do penance for it. Again.

A door opened somewhere but Rymur did not move his bowed head. No one would disturb him. Soft footsteps approached, slow, almost painful, but not threatening. They stopped. Slowly, Rymur turned to look at the black-cloaked figure who stood at the foot of the bier as if paying his last respects. The cloak hung oddly from one shoulder.

"Quendar...have you returned to haunt me?" Rymur spoke softly so as not to drive away the apparition. "I never meant to kill you, please believe me. It - just happened."

"Things do not 'just happen', My Liege."

"No" , Rymur admitted.

"Just as Cotranden did not 'just die'."

"You know how he died? Yes, of course, on the Other Side you would know things like that. Tell me how my son died."

"He was poisoned."

"What??" Rymur startled out of his dreamlike state and almost overbalanced on his numb legs.

"Poisoned?"

"By some of Calleel's men. He thought he was drinking potcheen, but it was sporewort, a clear, tasteless and lethal distillation which made him go slowly to sleep."

"You can prove this?"

"I can. Do you wish me to produce pieces of the bottle and a herbalist who can testify to what it contained? The only sign of sporewort poisoning in humans is yellow discolouration of the finger and toe nails."

"Why? Why would Calleel kill my son?"

"So that you would destroy me and my dragons."

"I knew he resented you from the day you came here, but to kill Cotranden...."

The dark figure began to withdraw.

"Wait, Quendar! At least tell me you forgive me!"

"I forgive you, Rymur. You have released me to a better life." A door closed.

Daken caught the cloaked figure as he swayed slightly, and a yellow-haired girl supported him on the other side.

"You could go back, Daken...Rymur will forgive you for taking the dragons away..."

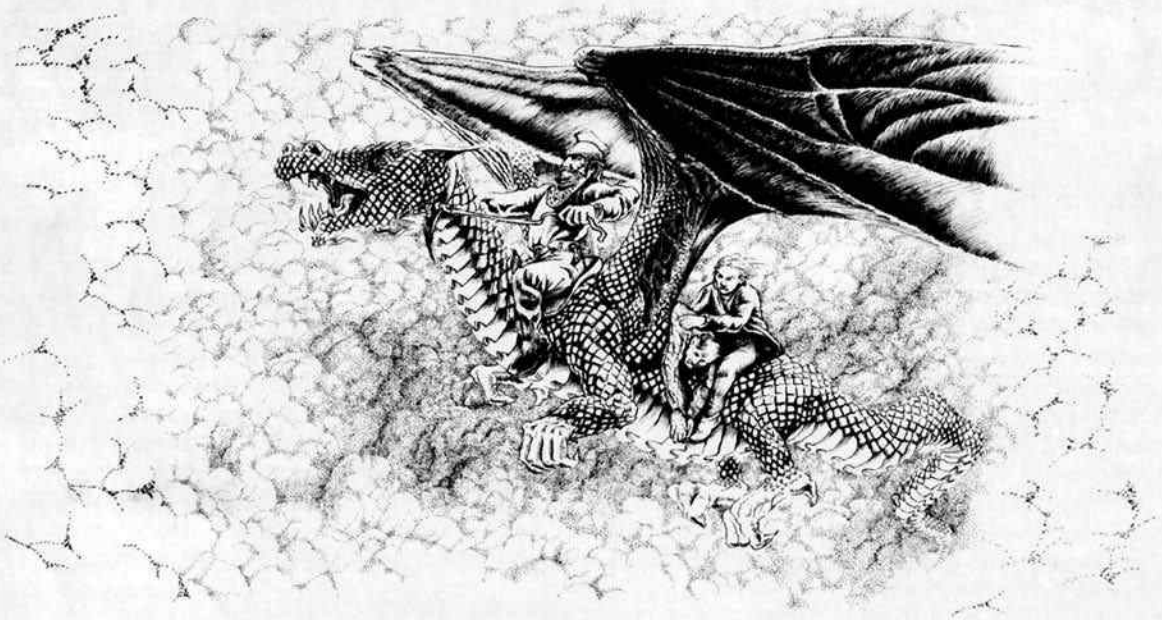
"Where you go, the dragons go."

"Then let us go far from the sorcerer's lair. I long to see something other than rock and yet more rock."

Two dragons stood outlined against the paling sky.

"Do we become mercenaries, Lord?" Daken mounted and took Kiera up behind him.

"I would prefer the term...a free company", Quendar said, taking the reins from the boy who held them, mounting, and helping him up. "What think you of ... Cotranden's Company, Ellis?"



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VOYAGES BEYOND

THE TWENTY YEAR VOYAGE by Wendy Graham.

At 7.30 pm Eastern Standard Time on September 9th 1966, a new science fiction series premiered on NBC in America. Critical reaction was 'Iffy', but it went on to build a select and loyal audience in the three years it was allowed to run, before being sacrificed to the great **US TV God**, Ratings.

What no-one thought at the time was that in the next twenty years, the programme would become a world-wide phenomenon.

*Happy Birthday **Star Trek!***

I make no excuse for devoting my column this month to a tribute to ***Star Trek***, not just because I happen to be a fan, but because anything as ephemeral as a TV series which survives for 20 Years deserves to have its score of years marked and saluted. (And isn't it strange that it is the good SF which seems to survive - ***Dr Who, The Twilight Zone*** - {now again in production in the US})

Since that first show (***The Man Trap***), the logistics of the show's popularity have become staggering. Even now, as you read this, someone, somewhere in the world is watching *Star Trek* in some language, someone is probably packing for a convention of fans, and they're working on post-production of a fourth film, which will inevitably break opening week box office records as did its three predecessors (even though it is due to open in Britain inauspiciously on Friday, February 13th next year...)

Star Trek was the brainchild of a former airline pilot and Los Angeles policeman, **Gene Roddenberry**, who sold the idea of a ***'Wagon Train to the Stars'*** series to **Desilu Studios** (owned by a comedy actress who was no mean shakes herself in the long running series stakes, **Lucille Ball**).

NBC expressed an interest and commissioned a pilot episode. That was in April 1964.

Roddenberry submitted three stories and NBC picked ***The Cage*** as the one they wanted made into a pilot.

Immediately, work began on creating a whole new universe in which the **USS Enterprise**, then Captained by **Robert T. April**, would fly. In spite of the *Wagon Train* tag which was needed to sell the idea to the network, who remain it seems, convinced of the lack of intelligent life on the viewing side of the TV screen, Roddenberry wanted to make a series which was credible, not only in terms of being a variable future for mankind, but also dramatically.

Science Fiction in those days was still very much in the 'Bug-Eyed Monster' phase of development (CBS turned down *Star Trek* because they preferred ***Lost In Space...***) and broadcasters seemed to believe that the basic rules of drama could safely be ignored once you crossed the ozone layer.

A lot of time, money and energy was spent on getting the background to *Star Trek* right.

The design and construction of the Enterprise 'Bridge alone cost $60,000. This attention to detail means that the same set still looks good, and credible today while, for example *Dr Who's* Tardis of 20 years ago was clearly working with the aid of valves!

In all, more had been spent on sets alone than had ever been spent on any pilot show before, and probably more than on many a motion picture.

Finally, the pilot, starring **Jeff Hunter** as **Captain Christopher Pike**, and with a female 'Second in Command', played by a dark-haired **Majel Barrett**, was finished and delivered to NBC in February 1965.

It was rejected. It was 'Too Cerebral'. It would go over the head of most viewers (which either says a lot for American Intelligence in general or the intelligence of NBC top brass), and they did not like the pointy-eared alien **Mr Spock.**

Star Trek could easily have died right there, but NBC did show some glimmering of something because they decided to break with all precedent and order a second pilot.

Save Our Spock!

They plumped for a second script and particularly asked that Spock be dropped. Only a long battle, and Roddenberry's stubborn belief in the character saved the best-known alien in history from disappearing forever.

NBC so disliked Spock that initial publicity photographs had the ears and slanting eyebrows airbrushed out.

The show was re-cast. **William Shatner** was given command of the Enterprise as **Captain James T. Kirk** and at a cost of $330,000 the second pilot, ***Where No Man Has Gone Before,*** (later aired as episode three) was delivered in January 1966. NBC decided *Star Trek* would *'Boldly Go Where No Man Has Gone Before'.*

There were to be 79 episodes. The five year mission was curtailed after three, when the then 'system of assessing ratings' gave *Star Trek* a bad showing. Using present systems it was a smash hit, so far as advertisers were concerned because the people who had the most money to spend were the people who loved it.

These days, ratings are much kinder. The latest run of *Trek,* on BBC 2 at the dreadful time of 6.pm on a Thursday, still took it into the ratings nearly every week, even as high as fourth place, and despite that, the BBC still drops a week's showing at the mere mention of something like the Upper Bogtwistle Tiddlewinks Championship.

Over the three years *Star Trek*, under the guise of science fiction, explored not only the galaxy, but also many of our present day problems. They examined and commented on the Vietnam War, systems of government, religion, capitalism, civil liberties and racialism.

They crewed the ship with a mixture of colours and races (**USS** means **United Space Ship**, not **United States Ship**), they made some award winning programmes and some real clunkers, but above all they made something which, though they didn't know it at the time, would endure, and not only endure, but set a standard for SF on the box. They were the first and best - and in many ways, still are.

Good Ol' (sic) NBC wanted to kill off *Star Trek* at the end of its second series, but bowed to a million letter plus campaign which innundated them with pleas and necessitated the hiring of extra staff to deal with the flood. The campaign was spearheaded by **Bjo Trimble**, still active as a fan and, at the time of writing, due to guest at the regular Trek convention held over August Bank Holiday in this country.

NBC however, even though they agreed to a third series, gave it such a dreadful broadcast time and allowed such junk scripts, that plus the lack of Gene Roddenberry as Producer, (he moved **'upstairs'** in protest at the treatment of the show) meant that the show died slowly and even the fans didn't have the heart to fight again.

Almost immediately, the show went into syndication which means that it was sold for showing round the world (to at least 150 different stations at the last count) and it took off. Contrary to belief and appearances, the actors didn't make their fortunes from all those showings. Their contracts only allowed for small payments for the first two US showings, then not a cent more. By then Desilu was part of Paramount, who laughed all the way to the bank.

With some 100 US stations showing *Star Trek*, some every night of the week, and other countries regularly scheduling the series, in English, and dubbed into other languages, the growth of *Star Trek*'s fandom has continued until, by present times it is arguably a sub-culture all of its own. There are at least 450 fan clubs worldwide.

In Britain there are two major gatherings of fans a year, where *Trekkers* gather to wear fancy dress, watch episodes and hear talks from many associated with the show, including actors, and writers.

All these fans have always had things given back to them by the show as well. When it came to collecting 300 extras needed for a crowd scene for the first movie, 150 of them were fans, and when Gene Roddenberry got his Hollywood Boulevard Star, the fans were again invited.

While *Star Trek* was apparently in the doldrums, crew dispersed, and only the fans left to keep interest alive, publishers weren't so slow in realising the interest in it, and to date at least 75 *Trek* related books have been issued, from the earliest **'The Making of *Star Trek*'** by **Stephen E. Whitfield** through to many fiction spin-offs of varying standard.

But that's all there was of *Star Trek* for about 12 years until ***Star Wars*** hit the screen, and Paramount decided they'd better have a science fiction product - yesterday. There was a great deal of scurrying round, until Gene Roddenberry quietly pointed out that they still owned a ready-made SF package of proven success...

After a great deal of muddling about between a TV series and a cinema production - which showed in the final release, *Star Trek* returned in 1979 with ***'Star Trek The Motion Picture'***, tediously and drably directed by **Robert Wise**.

Gene Roddenberry was again producer, and all the cast and many of the backstage crew warped back in time to sign for another stint aboard a re-furbished Enterprise.

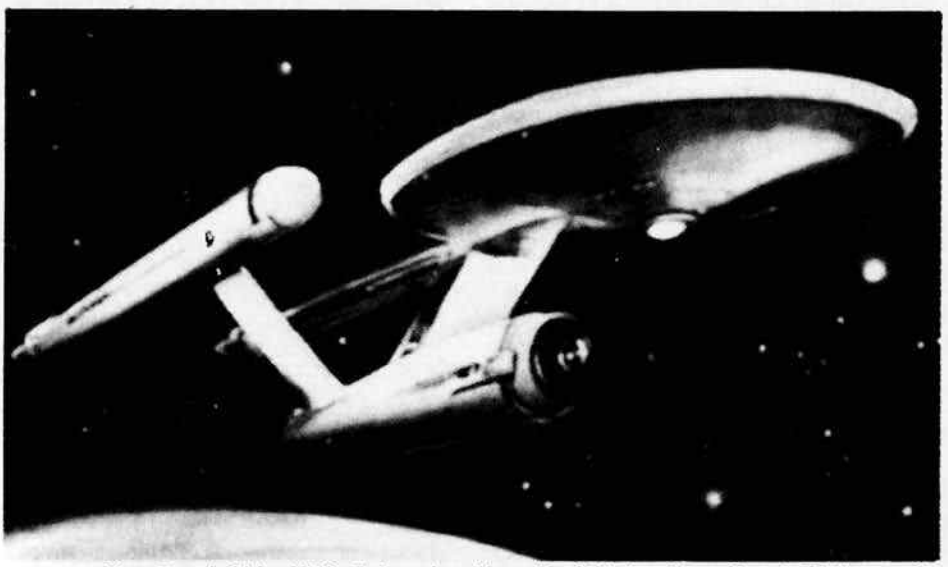
This re-uniting of the cast was a major feat in itself - **Leonard Nimoy** especially proved reluctant to painfully re-point his ears after being typecast as Spock almost all of his career. He finally signed on only 24 hours before the launching press conference after realising 'I certainly wouldn't want anyone else playing Spock or *Star Trek* happening without him'.

The film cost $20 million and earned $100 million. It was a financial smash and a *Star Trek* flop. It was great SF but it wasn't anything except ***'Star Trek The Slow Motion Picture'***. The ponderous special effects and all-over grey look of the design overshadowed totally the strengths of the story which were themselves submerged by having been re-written so often for the switches between TV and cinema.

History repeated itself when Paramount treated this first film as a first pilot, and asked for another.

This time the studio listened to the fans and for the second film, ***'The Wrath of Khan'*** they swept away the grey and brought back **Ricardo Montalban** (now in ***'The Colbys'***) to reprise the role of **Khan Sihgh** from the episode ***'Space Seed'***. Most important of all, they were true to the characters as defined in the series, so that while critics may mumble, this, and the third film ***'The Search for Spock'*** are true *Star Trek*, warps and all. They should be, for the director of the third and fourth films is Leonard Nimoy.

In fact, from what I've heard so far about the fourth film (watch for Spock mind meld with a whale and also Dr McCoy and the kidneys...!?), it is getting to seem that you can't be in the movie unless you were in the series, and fans should be delighted to hear that. Not only are the



The Good Ship USS Enterprise Herself, Still Looking Good 20 Years On

Nichelle Nichols is Uhura in
Star Trek III: The Search For Spock
©Copyright 1984 Paramount Pictures Corporation

regulars back (of course) but also **Mark Lenard** as **Sarek**, Spock's father, **Grace Lee Whitney** (formerly Yeoman and now Transporter Chief **Janice Rand**), and best of all, **Jane Wyatt** as Spock's human mother **Amanda**.

Twenty things you might not have known about Star Trek...

1). **"Beam me up Scotty"** actor **Jimmy Doohan** left a finger on the D-Day beach when he was gunned down into a shell hole and hit by eight bullets. His claim to be earth's only Starship and Warp Drive Engineer has never been disputed, and he has become expert on the more primitive 20th century space engineering, welcomed by **NASA**.

2). Speaking of NASA, actress **Nichelle Nichols (Uhura)** spent a year working for NASA recruiting minorities for astronaut training. **Sally Ride** was one of her 'Finds'.

3). Leonard Nimoy, tired of people staring at his ears, wrote a book entitled ***'I Am Not Spock'***, then chickened (or Blomeek'd) out and subtitled it ***'But If I'm Not, Who Is?'***.

4). The BBC has never shown three existing *Star Trek* episodes, and shown one only once.

They (***Miri, Plato's Stepchildren, The Empath, Whom Gods Destroy*** and ***About Miri***) were dropped after a whisper of complaints, which decision is surprising since the ultra-cautious US censor passed them, all those years ago.

5). *Star Trek* was the first programme to admit its cast was fallible by releasing its 'out-takes' or Bloopers to fans for their enjoyment.

6). The first **space shuttle** was renamed **'Enterprise'** by the **President** after a fan campaign and had its ceremonial roll out, not to the 'Stars and Stripes', but to **Alexander Courage's** theme from the TV series. All the cast were there, bar Shatner.

7). More than 75 *Trek* books have been published. *'The making of Star Trek'* has gone through 24 re-prints when I last checked.

8). Some fan conventions have attracted over 20,000 attendees.

9). *Star Trek* is credited with TV's first inter-racial kiss. Captain Kirk kissed Uhura - and Spock kissed Nurse Chapel - in *'Plato's Stepchildren'*.

10). The only prop to survive to the film was Uhura's earpiece. Actress Nichelle Nichols missed it on the first day of filming and one of the old ones was unearthed and used after a frantic search.

11). Creator Gene Roddenberry is the first producer of a TV series to be honoured by the award of a 'Star' set in the Pavement of Hollywood Boulevard.

12). The most well-known split infinitive in history 'To Boldly Go' is also now the only correct one, since it has been 'allowed' by Grammarians.

13). The first pilot episode ***'The Cage'*** wasn't lost. Running out of production time during the making of the first series, they used it as the historical material for the only two-part story, 'The Menagerie'.

14). The gold shirts of the command section of the crew from the TV series are in fact green. They look gold because of peculiar processing effects.

15). William Shatner and Jimmy Doohan are both Canadian. Shatner and Leonard Nimoy were born within three days of each other.

16). Helmsman Sulu (**George Takai**), is a keen runner, and carried the **Olympic Torch** for a stage in **Los Angeles**.

17). **Walter Koenig** is a trained psychologist. He also wrote a very funny diary of the filming of the first *Trek* Film called ***'Chekov's Enterprise'***.

18). Gene Roddenberry aquited the nickname ***'Great Bird of the Galaxy'*** from a line in an early episode.

19). Noted SF author **James Blish** did the hovelisations of the TV series. Gene Roddenberry did the first film and **Vonda McIntyre** the other two.

20). Spock's famous neck-pinch was invented by Nimoy after a script called for Spock to bop someone over the head with a phaser, and the actor felt that wasn't something Spock would do.

And finally, Paramount have promised that they'll keep making *Trek* as long as we keep watching!

JANET & PETER

The Show

GM's Notes

This is a scenario for **Runequest** characters with skills between 50% and 75% and little Rune magic, or **AD&D** characters of 4th- 5th Level. Statistics are given in full for the Circus troupe, who can be played as PCs by the party, or run as NPCs, though they should be essentially non-combative.

Stats for the other major NPCs are also given at the back of the adventure.

INTRODUCTION

Ghararna is a prosperous little village in a fertile valley, surrounded by mountains on one side and steppes on the other. However, a Horde of Barbarian Nomads have recently arrived in the area: they took three hostages from the village to ensure obedience, and are planning to stay for the winter. Worse still, they plan to attack a nearby tribe of non-humans, the **Karagoi**, in the mountains near the valley: they have captured a leader of the tribe, throwing the Karagoi into confusion. The villagers have had good relations with the tribe; they fear the coming war will destroy the friendship. Also, the likely battleground will be the villagers' fields, destroying the unharvested crops that are vital for surviving the harsh winter.

To counter this threat, the village elders have pooled all their resources to hire the party: their objectives are to make the Horde leave without carrying out any reprisals against the village, to rescue the hostages, and to ensure the tribe do not attack the village.

The villagers have also paid **Sravindiy**, the boss of a travelling circus, to take the party into the camp as part of the circus: the circus will give what aid it safely can. Once in, the party can learn what the Horde is like and decide on their course of action, either acting immediately or after the circus leaves.

Ghararna

There are eleven buildings and a shrine to a crop goddess **(RQ:Ernalda)** in the village; without the hostages there are 62 inhabitants. This is a typical rural community (ie no adventurers' supply shops!); the people are worried and cowed. They will not fight against the Horde directly, and will not readily deceive them, for fear of the consequences. The village is loosely run by the three village elders: **Arngos Gharsh, Alusstor Morru** and **Doogol Tarvish** (All typical peasants). Gharsh is ageing but coldly handsome; his wife, **Moyra**, is one of the hostages. Morru is small and charming; his daughter **Klara** is the second hostage. Tarvish is the third Hostage.

The Karagoi

The Karagoi tribe arrived in the mountains a number of generations ago, having broken away from more militant brethren. Peace with the nearby humans has been maintained by a series of wise leaders, who executed the more racist members of the tribe: the few incidents between the groups have not been enough to provoke attacks by bloodthirsty adventurers.

However, their current warrior leader, **Niloth**, was captured by a Horde raiding party: the priest of a war-god and his followers in the tribe have seized the incident to try to take control of the tribe to attack the Horde. Currently, a power struggle is destroying the tribe's unity. Niloth's return would reunite the tribe; otherwise they would do nothing except squabble amongst themselves until a leader managed to get control (which could take years!).

Exactly which faction visitors would meet is pure chance; that faction would attempt to use the characters to further their aim. The characters will probably not be killed immediately unless they do something stupid (like get violent). They are unlikely to get the warring factions to co-operate, though, as the tribe see their internal struggles as more important than fighting the real enemy.

AD&D: The Karagoi is a tribe of around 1500 Orcs (500 Warriors).
RQ: The Karagoi are a Troll clan, numbering nearly 350 (40 Dark Trolls, 20 Great Trolls and 9 Cave Trolls, the rest Trollkin); their Dark Troll priestess of Kyger Litor is stuggling for control against a Zorak Zoran Death Priest.

The Show

This small, travelling circus travels in brightly-painted wagons far and wide, and will set up in any village. There is strong loyalty among the circus-folk, but circus life is not a source of vast income. The circus's arrival in this area was fortuitous. The circus people are skilled professionals, but may be persuaded to help the party. For the party to be with the circus, though, they must have acts they can perform: Sravindiy will insist on this to maintain their cover.
RQ: Most members of the circus worship Donandar, the God of Players, Music and Dance.

Sravindiy (The Ringmaster)

Although in middle-age, Sravindiy is fit and agile. He runs the circus, and organises it: He will co-operate with the party, but he is responsible for his people and will disown the party to save his troupe if necessary. He has dealt with groups like the Horde before: he can advise what acts he thinks will go down well (barbarians dislike subtlety or refinement, preferring spectacle, colour, sex, action and slapstick humour). Sravindiy looks slightly odd: He has one green and one blue eye. He has a long-standing but stormy relationship with **"Madame Magik"**.

Madame Magik (Illusion Weaver)

Madame Magik is one of the most experienced entertainers; in her late thirties, she is imposing rather than attractive. Her act is the creation of startling and impressive illusions. She has a dramatic taste in clothes and mannerisms, and has a fiery nature. Normally she lives in Sravindiy's wagon, but periodically she storms out 'for good' and moves in with Lizzara.
RQ: A long-standing Priestess of Donandar, Madame Magik's act is a judicious mix of Rune Magic and simple stage trickery, enlivened by large numbers of Light Spells cast on her props. There is a tiny shrine to Donandar in Sravindiy's wagon.

'Prince' Djandiss

(Knife Thrower and Sword Swallower)

The black-skinned 'Prince' is a polished performer: He is cool, calm and unflappable, with a quiet but inventive wit. He is very imaginative, and devises many of the acts. Under the artificial show conditions it is almost unknown for him to make a mistake when knife throwing: This is just as well, as he is deeply in love with 'Beauty', his target.

'Beauty' (Knife Thrower's Target and Tight Rope Walker)

Despite appearing the dumb blonde in her act, 'Beauty' (her real name is Tanassi) is the circus's best fighter; her steady nerve, courage and stubborn nature have proved invaluable on the few occasions when the circus has faced violent enemies. She is deeply in love with Djandiss.

The Lady Lizzara (Tiger Trainer)

A tiny (4'9") but beautiful elf, Lizzara is in complete control of her charges, two Siberian Tigers. They obey only her simple verbal commands (in elven), and are anything but tame. Note she NEVER uses a whip. She works well with the other circus people, but has no close friendships- to her, humans are short-lived mayflies. She thus has no interest in either 'Spiral' or 'Professor Strange', who are competing for her attentions. Most of her time is spent looking after the tigers: She will fly into a berserk rage at anyone who so much as threatens them.
RQ: Lizzara is a renegade elf, now vaguely worshipping Donandar; her reasons for leaving her people are not known, but her tigers have a taste for meat....

VIALLS PRESENT

MUST GO ON

'Professor Strange'
(Stage Magician and Fire Eater)

This short, stocky figure shares a wagon with 'Spiral', an arrangement that pleases neither. He is somewhat pompous and self-important, and expends much effort trying to impress Lizzara, he has little regard for the other members of the circus.

RQ: The other circus-people think 'Strange' is a casual Orlanthi, but are dubious about him normally: he is tolerated because of his act's quality.

The Mighty Torgul and Giga
(Wrestler and Bear Keeper)

This small but powerfully-built individual wears an animal skin (RQ: his own!): his act consists of wrestling Giga and then wrestling anyone from the audience who wants to try him out. He NEVER loses, due to his strength and skill. He is very protective of Giga. He enjoys the limelight, and is a show-off. Giga appears fierce and savage, but is actually rather soft and friendly.

'Spiral' (Clown and Tumbler)

'Spiral' is the straight-man clown. A bubbly and handsome character (until made up), 'Professor Strange' is the only person he dislikes. He suspects he is getting nowhere with Lizzara, but continues for the fun of it.

RQ: 'Spiral' is a rejected Initiate of Challana Arroy; he is still a worshipper of the Goddess, and retains a few skills he gained. He is a vegetarian.

AD&D: 'Spiral' is the circus's only cleric: His god is a god of shared pleasures, whose creed is joy for all and the ending of sufferings. He provides cures and other spells for the show.

Gorphus the Gross
(Clown and Tumbler)

Gorphus plays the big, lumbering clown, the butt of the agile and quick-tongued Jando. In fact, Gorphus is a gentle soul: he and Jando are good friends, with a mutual interest in gourmet food, and share a wagon.

RQ: Gorphus was bought a number of years ago to provide heavy labour for the circus; now, he is considered one of the stalwarts, and is no longer thought of as a slave.

AD&D: Well, what DO you do if you're a neutral good Ogre?

Jando (Clown and Tumbler)

The third clown, Jando is small, fast and agile; his stage personality is cheeky and irreverent. In fact, he is serious and slightly lacking in humour, with a keen mind for small details: He is the circus's accountant! He is quite friendly, despite this.

THE RING

This is set up in the open air, with a high pole at each side. strung between these is the tight-rope. A low wall runs around the ring. There is improvised seating around three quarters of the ring. The final side opens into a screened area where the troupe can prepare off-stage. Music is played by whichever members are off-stage and available at the time. All members of the troupe are musicians.

The Circus's Normal Act:

1). Introduction by Sravindiy
2). Fire-eating by Professor Strange dressed as a dragon (Djandiss 'kills'him).
3). Djandiss' Swordswallowing.
4). Lady Lizzara and the Tigers.
5). Clowns (*1)
6). Djandiss 'Beauty' and the Knife-throwing.
7). Tightrope Walk.
8). Clowns (*2)
9). Stage Magic from Professor Strange, (Beauty is his assistant).
10). Torgul Wrestles Giga.
11). Wrestling Challenge to the audience: Three Champions will be chosen from the audience (who will lose).
12). Clowns (*3)
13). Strange Creatures, lots of coloured lights, and weird visions (Madame Magik, with other people in costumes, such as a beast like a chinese dragon).
14). Grand Finale.

The party should negotiate with Sravindiy their own acts in the line-up. The troupe will give all the help they can organising acts. Of course, Madame Magik ALWAYS gets top billing...

THE HORDE:
The Camp.

The area around the camp has been cleared of any scrub that might give cover. The hundred or so tents are surrounded by a half built earth ditch and wall structure. All the signs are that the tribe is planning to stay for some time, as indeed they are. Zanurr intends that this camp be the Horde's winter quarters.

Within the camp there are some 150 warriors, 200 women, 35 older people, and 300 children.

The tents are arranged around fires, in groups, (see map). Small tents are the home of a single warrior and his family (1-2 wives, 1-4 children and possibly an elderly relative). Unless otherwise labelled, larger tents are dormitory tents, housing up to 12 unmarried young warriors.

Each cluster of tents is an extended family grouping called a Tyan, with fierce internal loyalty. The warriors of a tyan are likely to ride and fight and hunt together. There is no internal structure to the tyans. While there will probably be an elder warrior who receives respect and attention, he has little control over the other members of his tyan. Most tyan members will follow their own tyan's views, but it is quite possible the party will meet a member of a tyan who **DOES NOT** support his tyan's position, though is still loyal to the tyan. Each tyan is represented by a distinctive symbol or sign (for instance, the tyan of the divided beards, or the tyan of the axe-carriers).

The tyans are not totally rigid. Changing tyans is possible but unlikely for men. Women will change tyan on marriage. By custom there is never marriage between a man and a woman of the same tyan. There is some rivalry between the tyans, but this is mostly friendly. Zanurr discourages internal strife by executing anyone getting too warlike.

The main source of food for the Horde is meat, (sables, deer or goats) hunted down by Horde warriors and prepared for each warrior by his woman. Women do all domestic tasks, such as looking after children, tanning leather, making pottery, fashioning tools and implements and making clothes. Women are normally treated as inferior, though a few female warriors ride with the Horde, receiving the respect due to an equal. (normally they have to earn such respect by besting a male warrior).

RQ: Originally, the Horde nominally worshipped Yelm, but a certain number of members were initiates of Daka Fal. However, when the old leader, Yott was injured, the ancestor-worshipper Zanurr swiftly took power. Now the Daka Fal and Yelm factions officially carry an equal weight.

The Guards

The hostages are being held in a small tent amongst Zanurr's cluster of tents. Four warriors are on duty outside the tent. All will be members of the same tyan, each tyan guarding for four hours.

The hostages are unharmed, but have ankle chains leading to a spike set firmly into the ground outside the tent (Minimum17 strength to remove this. Only one person can grip the spike). The manacle around each ankle was riveted on by a blacksmith (there is no lock to pick).

Niloth is in a separate tent in the chief's group of tents. His tent is more comfortable, with cushions and a brazier (Zanurr boasts he never maltreats fallen enemies - he only tortures them!). Again, four warriors guard the tent. Niloth, too is chained. An ankle chain leads to a spike outside the tent. He also has his wrists attached together by a length of chain sufficient to enable him to eat but not to do much else. These chains too are riveted into place.

RQ: The chains are iron, but there is cloth between the iron and the troll's bare skin. Of course, it makes his magic unuseable.

Guard Duties

Guards at one post always come from the same tyan to avoid squabbles. No one tyan is allocated guard duties at more than one site, to make coups more difficult. The major guard sites are at the gate, the bridge, the chief's tents, the wall (three sets of guards), the corral, the unbuilt wall section and the prisoners. Tyans rotate duties (so no one group gets the unpleasant jobs permanently).

Within The Camp

Circus members are free to wander around the camp. Of course, they are likely to be followed around by Hordes of curious children and may excite suspicion if they get too interested in the tents of the hostages or the prisoner. As party members wander through the camp, they should see such events as children playing marbles with pebbles, the blacksmith straightening a sword, a woman drying strips of meat over a fire, a warrior being hen-pecked by his woman, a child being chastised for stealing food, a group of warriors breaking a horse by the corral, two women making pots from clay by the river as they complain about their men, a duel between two warriors, old men sitting reminiscing, a warrior beating his slave, and so forth, to show that the camp is a living society, rather than just a large number of cardboard thugs. Also common in the camp are semi-wild dogs who scavenge food there. Note that these animals are likely to object if an invisible person passes one of them.

PEOPLE:

Zanurr: (the horde's leader)

Nearly forty, Zanurr is a violent, unpleasant warrior. He is also a calculating and cold-blooded ruler who knows how to keep his underlings in line. He enjoys leading the Horde, which is loyal to him due to the loot and conquest he provides. He has faith in his own success. He has not yet admitted that the Horde might not be able to defeat the Karagoi. He is not superstitious, and considers that the gods were invented by lesser men to justify their weaknesses. However, he respects magic. He believes that priests and clerics use merely a variety of normal (RQ: Battle) magic. Hedoes, though, pretend to believe in the gods to maintain his position. Gods are popular in the camp. Zanurr was a Horned Helmetter, but officially now is a member of all tyans. The Horned Helmets still support him utterly.

RQ: As far as Zanurr is anything, he is an ancestor-worshipper, who learned his spells from an old Shaman in the wilds, before he joined the Horde. He claims to revere Daka Fal, but many of the Horde doubt this. He also pays lip-service to Yelm, to maintain the support of all the Horde.

Skull (Zanurr's Bodyguard)

Skull is tall, gaunt and pale, with deep sunk eyes. His strange, nightmarish figure could easily be taken for a vampire. Apparently intensely loyal to Zanurr, he will ferociously attack anything attacking his master. He is very strong willed, and will spar with opponents verbally. He is a good speaker but has a tendency to resort to smear tactics and insults. Popular with his tyan (the scarred faces) and the more warlike of the Horde, he would not oppose Zanurr, but if Zanurr was dead or gone he would try to take the leadership.

RQ: Like Zanurr, Sull is an ancestor-worshipper. Unlike Zanurr, Skull is very devout. Unkind GMs could hint at Vivamort membership....

Thara(Zanurr's Chief Woman)

Thara is in her early thirties, and is extremely beautiful. She was another Horde's Chief's wife. She changed sides and killed her husband when she saw her Horde was about to lose a battle with Zanurr's Horde. Now she makes herself invaluable to Zanurr (many of his plans come from her, though he does not realise this). She has given Zanurr two fine sons (one was born a daughter, but she swapped it for a boy-child born the same night), Zandar (aged 6) and Talgir (aged 4). Thara is bloodthirsty and vicious. Her aim is to stay alive and in power, preferably behind the scenes. She is loyal to herself only, she would be quite happy to betray the Horde if she was given a better offer. To this end she has made Zanurr keep their Karagoi prisoner alive. She has told Niloth she saved his life, and appears to him to be a prisoner too. She is a skilled poisoner, she uses poison to get rid of problems. Her current problem is Kiri, Zanurr's new favourite. The girl thinks she is pregnant with Zanurr's child. Thara fears if she poisons a third favourite Zanurr may get suspicious, so she is framing Kiri and Kazayn (who wants the leadership) for attempting to poison Zanurr; see The Feast below.

RQ: Thara's true allegience is unknown to anyone else in the Horde. She pretends to worship Eiritha.

Kiri (Concubine)

RQ: Worshipper of Eiritha

Zanurr saw this seventeen year old in the camp a few months ago and decided he wanted her. Her father gladly gave her to him. She is happy being Zanurr's favourite. She thinks she is pregnant by him, but won't tell him until she is certain. She is not very bright, and trusts Thara totally. She thinks she loves Zanurr, and hopes he cares for her.

Yollop (Horde Member)

RQ: Worshipper of Yelm

This fat, slimy and repulsive sychophant lives in Zanurr's tent and survives by crawling to him. Almost everyone else dislikes him (his nickname is Zanurr's Lap-Dog. No tyan will have him. He is also a confirmed (but poor) liar, saying what people want to hear. Quite amoral and disgusting. He is only interested in surviving.

RQ: Yollop is nominally a worshipper of Yelm, but currently espouses ancestor worship to please Zanurr.

Niloth (Captured Karagoi Leader)

RQ: Dark Troll: Runelord of Kyger Litor

A strong, intelligent and cautious warrior-leader, Niloth took over a few years ago when his predecessor (an aged warrior) stepped down. He has problems with the more fanatical Karagoi, but is generally well-respected. He opposes warfare unless unavoidable. Generally honourable, he can be ruthless if necessary. He is surprised to be alive still. He believes Thara, a prisoner of Zanurr, has interceded for him, and is very grateful. Were he to be rescued, he would wish Thara to be freed, too.

His weaponry and armour has been taken from him and stored in Zanurr's tent. Needless to say, Niloth would be

grateful to have them back.

Kazayn: (Horde Member)
RQ: Yelm Warrior
An upstanding and honourable (-ish) warrior with a mane of yellow hair, Kazayn is a major contendor for Zanurr's position of leader. He has made various moves to undermine Zanurr's popularity. As aggressive as Zanurr, he will kill to gain his ends. He has whole-hearted support of his tyan, the scarlet sashes, and is generally popular.

Carrign: (Horde Member).
RQ: Yelm Warrior (Initiate).
Carrign is a popular warrior even though he is not bloodthirsty. He advocates peace through power, and wants to cow the Karagoi into submission through fear of the Horde rather than through direct military action. Zanurr listens to, but disagrees with his views. Only half of his tyan, the Green Cloaks, support him. He has shown no interest in the leadership, but might take it on if shown this was for the benefit of the Horde. An honourable man.

Makoss: (Horde Member).
RQ: Yelm Elder (Priest of Yelm).
An elderly warrior, Makoss dislikes what has happened to the Horde since he fought in it. Under Zanurr it has becomesavage and cruel. He opposes this, but has little influence. He is respected by his tyan (the Divided Beards) but has no power in it. He would support the deposed leader Yott, or possibly Pyne or Carrign.
RQ: Makoss officiates at various ceremonies, but he is a minor figure beside Yarnix. His position is more honourary than anything else.

High Priest Yarnix
(Religious Leader)
This proud and egotistical cleric of the Horde's warrior deity is warlike and intolerant, and wants to wipe out the Karagoi. He is currently at logger-heads with Zanurr for not executing Niloth, and thus is a major critic of Zanurr. He is a superb Orator. His speeches are of blood and anger. There is no love in him. He is not stupid and will not risk himself---but no one else is of value. He would willingly rule the Horde, but currently lacks enough support. A member of no tvan.**RQ:** Yarnix is the top ranking priest of Yelm in the Horde. He sees wiping out the trolls as a divine duty.

Oldar: (Horde Member).
RQ: Yelm Warrior (Initiate)
Oldar organises the camp's guards. He got this honour recently by presenting Zanurr with a manticore his tyan (the Falconers) had slain. Utterly loyal to Zanurr, he obeys him without demur or thought. He is popular but not powerful in the camp. Not currently a leadership contender, he is too easily swayed. His only supporters are in his tyan.

Flokk: (Horde Member).
RQ: Yelm Warrior (Initiate).
Until Oldar was given Flokk's job as guard organiser, Flokk was a staunch supporter of Zanurr. Now he is less certain of the chief. His tyan, The Axe Carriers, is angry. They are loyal to Flokk, not Zanurr. They are the most organised and active tyan, and would support Flokk's leadership bid. However, Flokk still needs more general support. Flokk, a devious and clever organiser, works by stealth rather than direct action. He favours any actions that further his position. Ruthless.

Pyne: (Horde Member).
RQ: Warrior and Ancestor-Worshipper
This grim and ageing warrior used to be an advisor to Zanurr, but he was involved in a raid that failed and fell out of favour. Now he is a major critic of Zanurr. It is only his powerful and supportive tyan (the Fox Furs) that protect him. Pyne prefers to settle dispute with words, not swords. He is strong willed and will stand up for his own view with vigour. He is not yet seeking the leadership. He correctly fears Zanurr would take any excuse to execute him. A popular figure amongst the less bloodthirsty in the Horde.

Whytta: (Horde Member).
RQ: Initiate of Daka Fal.
This powerful warrior-woman bested four warriors to join the Horde. She is violent and aggressive, and her views are respected by Zanurr, whom she supports. She belongs to the tyan of the Braided Hair, despite objections from the men in the tyan. Not in the leadership battle ('she's a woman!') and so supports Zanurr ('the leader I know').

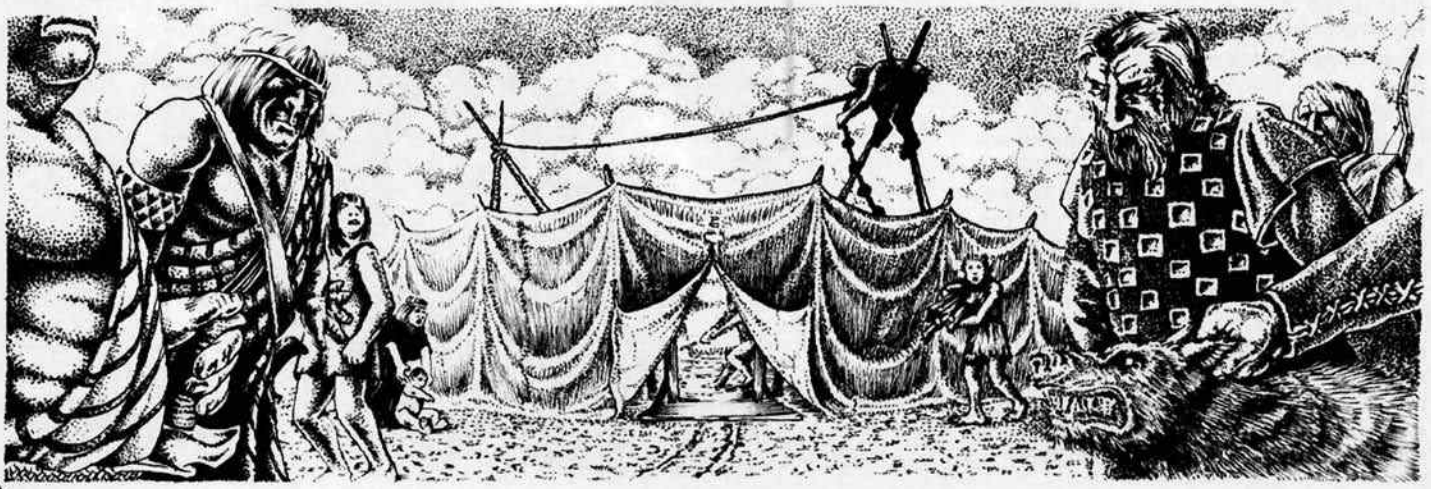
Yott: (Horde Member).
RQ: Yelm Elder (Priest).
Yott was chief before Zanurr took over. Yott survived the transition due to being popular but sick. Since then Yott has kept a low profile. He is opposed to violence, and fears the Karagoi will destroy the Horde. He is now advocating (increasingly strongly) forging a peace agreement with them. He is thus losing some popularity. Skull has undermined his authority within his tyan (the Scarred Faces), and he is losing their protection. Yott knows the risk he is taking, but his idealism will not let him back down. He might challenge Zanurr for the leadership, but he fears he would lose.
RQ: As a retired leader, by right Yott became a Yelm Elder. He is not comfortable in the position, though, disliking his subservience to Yarnix.

Kijoss (Gibbering Idiot)
This fanatical and psychotic warrior is in his late fifties. He is instantly recognisable by his shock of white hair standing on end. Kijoss favours violence against anyone. His tyan, the Fox Furs, tolerate him. Some people follow his lead. He probably wants to be chief, if it means he can kill things. Rumors say he is unhinged.
RQ: Kijoss is a Shaman, showing allegiance to Daka Fal. Yarnix and Kijoss are avowed enemies, each seeing the other as a threat to his authority. Kijoss is important to Zanurr and the ancestor-worshippers among the Horde, but is distrusted by the others.

Doogal Tarvish (Hostage)
Doogal has spent all his life in Ghararna, and understands little outside the natural cycle of seasons and farming which governs the lives of his people. He takes a fatalistic attitude. He has spent a good life, and if it must shortly end, so be it.

Moyra Garsh (Hostage)
Moyra is a stoic, facing her captivity with quiet courage. She does not fear death, and will give her life if it would help her people. On the other hand, she would not throw her life away fruitlessly, and would like to live.

Klara Haimish (Hostage)
Klara is a robust peasant woman, tough physically and mentally. She also has a



fiery disposition, causing her to talk back to her captors on various occasions. Given the opportunity she would take even a slim chance of escape.

Tyans And Members:

Axe-Carriers:	Flokk
Divided Beards:	Makoss
Fox Furs:	Pyne, Kijoss
Green Cloaks:	Carrign
Falconers:	Oldar
Horned Helmets:	"Zanurr"
Braided Hair:	Whytta
Scarred Faces:	Skull, Yott
Scarlet Sashes:	Kazayn

EVENTS

Arrival

On reaching the camp, the circus will be met by Kazayn. Unfortunately, Kazayn's response will be terror at Sravindiy's 'Evil Eyes'. To prevent Kazayn attacking the troupe, Sravindiy's response will be to claim that he is merely the lackey and that someone nearby is the actual leader. The GM should ensure a charismatic party member gets the job. It is then up to that party member to talk the circus into the camp. Kazayn's nature should become evident. This scenario depends on the party receiving sufficient information early on to be able to devise a suitable solution. The GM must make Kazayn come alive.

Once allowed into the camp, the circus will be allowed to set up in the clear area. Large numbers of warriors and children will gather to stare and poke their noses in. Any circus member wandering off without good reason will be noticed and brought back. The party should be encouraged to talk to the watchers.

Zanurr, learning of the circus from Kazayn, will summon the circus leader to meet him. The party member selected by Sravindiy can take a few others with him. Sravindiy would be a dubious choice, since many of the warriors are afraid of him (news spreads fast).

Zanurr will be sitting in his tent in state. Those in attendance will include Kiri and Thara. Thara will be watching VERY carefully, so that she can decide how to make use of the show. Zanurr wants to know about the circus, and to negotiate a two-night stay. He will pay up to 5000 silvers for TWO shows, one a night (he knows the unruly warriors will not do guard duty if it means missing the only show). Sravindiy will be pleased with any sum over 2000 silvers. The party will only receive a share of this, at most. Zanurr should not become suspicious of the party unless they are stupid. If he does grow suspicious, he will order a guard to be put on the circus, but the shows will still take place.

When the delegation are dismissed, they will be expected to return to the circus to prepare for the first show.

THE SHOWS

Each show will begin in the evening, once it is dark. Throughout the show, the ring will be surrounded by a large and moderately unruly audience. Guards elsewhere in the camp should remain on duty, though guards might slip away if given a good excuse. Guards will recognise circus members away from the show, and may get curious as to why they are not performing. Assuming the acts are lively, colourful and funny (slapstick not subtlety), the show would go down well. If it DOESN'T, the party will probably have a riot on their hands.

After the shows, most of the audience will wander off to their tents. The camp is normally fairly quiet and calm at night.

THE FEAST

After the first show, (assuming the show went well) Zanurr will invite all the members of the circus to an open air feast by his tents. Everyone who is ANYONE will be at the feast. The party should have ample opportunity to talk to any or all of the people present, and to learn about the structure and politics of the camp. Thara and Kiri (and other women), will serve the warriors. Thara will not stand out, but will be listening to what is being said. Zanurr will use the feast to impress his audience with his power. Other individuals will be out to gain prestige, score points off opponents and strengthen their position. It is unlikely that any arguments will dissolve into conflict.

Near the end of the feast, though, Kiri will bring in a cake and put it before Zanurr. Thara will cut a thick slice for Yollop while Zanurr is talking to someone else. Before Zanurr gets a chunk, Yollop will collapse, with stomache pains. Skull will investigate, to find the cake was poisoned. Kiri made the cake personally. Amongst her belongings is a bottle of poison. Zanurr, furious, will demand an explanation. She will seem confused, but will now tell Zanurr that she is pregnant and difuse his anger. Flokk will point out that Kiri, a scarlet sasher, has been seen with Kazayn in odd circumstances. In fact, these were innocent meetings, but Thara has ensured Flokk is suspicious. In Kazayn's tent will be found more of the poison. Needless to say, Thara set all this up. She actually poisoned the cake that Kiri was making. It is up to the party if they wish to become involved. If they do not, Kazayn will be executed the next evening. Kiri will be left alive until the child is born.

Of course, the arrest of Kazayn will start the camp buzzing with rumors. Many people will be angry and will want to act against Zanurr. It is up to the party to fuel this if they so wish.

THE SECOND DAY

Events from now onwards are dependant on the actions of the party. If there are no such actions, the camp will seethe for a few hours, Kazayn will be executed, and then the tension will slowly disappear.

OPTIONS

The party must decide what to do about the Horde. Certain actions will have particular effects:

Killing/Removing Zanurr

This is difficult to cause, but will result in a power-struggle between Kazayn, Skull, Yarnix, Pyne and Yott. Flokk and Carrign

might also be persuaded to become involved. Thara will attempt to become indispensible to all parties. Kiri will almost certainly be slain, since she bears Zanurr's child.

A Message From The Horde's God

Most warriors would obey any orders given by their god or his messenger. However, if the god's orders did not agree with Yarnix's own views, he would ignore them or seek to interpret them in a more favourable way. Zanurr does not believe in the God and would assume any apparition was a trick. Other members of the Horde would seek to use the God's orders to further their own position. Of course, faking such a message could get the fakers into serious trouble with their Gods...

The Disgracing Of Zanurr

Proving to the Horde that (for example) Thara made Zanurr's every decision would almost certainly get Zanurr overthrown. The problem would be proving it. Note that such a disgrace would probably get Thara killed too, so she will use all her wiles to avoid this.

Death Of Lesser Figures

Killing most other people would have little effect. Someone else would take over their position in the Horde. There would also be a major hunt for the killer(s). The killer, if proved guilty, might be lynched if his victim was popular. If not, Zanurr might have him executed if he was a rival or opponent. However, the deaths might alter the balance of power: see coups, below.

Rescue Of The Hostages

Escaping prisoners will be hunted by the warriors. The party will have to prevent their recapture. Even if successful, rescuing the hostages alone would be of little use. The Horde would search the village, take more hostages, and might execute a couple of people to prevent any further rescue attempts. If the hostages returned to the village, the Horde would find them and execute them.

If some OTHER actions were taken (such as internal strife or a coup) the hostages should be rescued. Otherwise one of the more bloodthirsty warriors will have them slain.

Returning Niloth To The Karagoi

If Niloth is returned to the Karagoi, the warring factions amongst them will collapse. A handful of individuals will be executed, but otherwise his return will be bloodless. With internal differences settled, the Karagoi are strong enough to negotiate a stand-off with more moderate Horde leaders.

WAR

For those with warhammer tendencies, war will result in the defeat of the Karagoi, who will flee into the mountains with around 300 male casualties. The Horde will lose about 50 of its warriors.

If Niloth is not released, the main battles will occur over the villagers' fields. The village will be burnt to the ground. Most of the villagers will die.

If Niloth is released AND told that the villagers are responsible, he will attempt to protect them. The Karagoi will still lose, but the Horde will lose 80 warriors. The village will survive, but the fields will still be destroyed. Half the villagers will starve over the winter.

COUPS

Currently Zanurr has control over the Horde. No single group holds enough power to take over from him. However, if the balance of power is altered (by killing or discrediting someone), a group might be able to take over, especially if Zanurr was removed from the scene. It is up to the party which group they seek to advance. Of course, a party may inadvertantly advance the wrong one...

"PLAGUE"

If the Horde is convinced there is plague in the village (some type of evidence will have to be produced), the Horde will almost certainly leave immediately. However, they are likely to burn down the village to sterilize it, unless the party can persuade them otherwise.

Getting The Circus Involved

If it becomes evident to the Horde that the circus is somehow involved in whatever the party is doing, there may be actions against the circus. Someone such as Zanurr, Flokk or Kazayn would happily unleash the warriors against the circus. The women and the valuables of the troupe would be good reward for supporting the leader. Pyne, Yott or Carrign would investigate the circus but might not take any action against it unless action is justified. Sravindiy, if he feels threatened, will disown the party and try to get the circus out as fast as possible. If the players are playing the part of the circus, of course, events will take place according to players' decisions. The party should remember that the circus cannot travel fast. Even if it flees, the Horde could catch and destroy it.

Wiping Out The Horde

This is well-nigh impossible. Consider the numbers. Any party trying this by a frontal assault will die. No party should have access to sufficient poison to poison the water supply (and the river flows into the village--- the party would also kill their employers). The tents are too far apart for a fire to spread easily. The warriors would respond before many individuals died.

If somehow successful, killing the whole Horde ought to produce immediate retribution from the party's God (s). There are children within the Horde, while not all the adults are evil.

This is also an EXTREMELY boring option!

FINAL COMMENTS

There is probably no single simple, completely satisfactory, solution to the situation, but a number of successful outcomes are possible. The party should be made aware that some options will result in the death of the hostages, or in a bloody war between Karagoi and Horde over the peasants' fields. The best a party will probably be able to achieve is a mixed victory- but no party should be totally successful all the time...

STATISTICS:

Sravindiy (The Ringmaster)
RQ: Initiate of Donandar.

STR:14	CON:13	SIZ: 10
INT: 16	POW:16	DEX:15
CHA:18		
Defence:15%	Move: 8	Hits: 13
Head:0/5	Chest: 0/6	Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4	Right Arm: 0/4	
Left Leg: 0/5	Right Leg: 0/5	

Spells: Coordination, Darkwall, Detect Enemies, Glamour, Healing 2, Light.
Skills: Oratory 85%, Map Making 45%, Hide Items 35%, Taste Analysis 30%, Riding 45%, Play Pipes 70%, Bargain 55%, Acting 60%.
Languages: Speak Sartarite 90%, Read/Write Sartarite 45%, Speak Tradetalk 80%, Read/Write Tradetalk 25%, Speak Esrolian 40%, Speak Tarshite 50%, Speak Lunar 35%, Speak Grazelander 40%.
Rune Magic: One use of concealment.
Dagger (1D4+2) SR8, 40%, Parry 45%, 12 Points.
Rapier (1D6+1) SR6, 45%, Parry 30%, 12 Points.

AD&D:
AC9; LVL4; HP12; Mage; Human; LN;

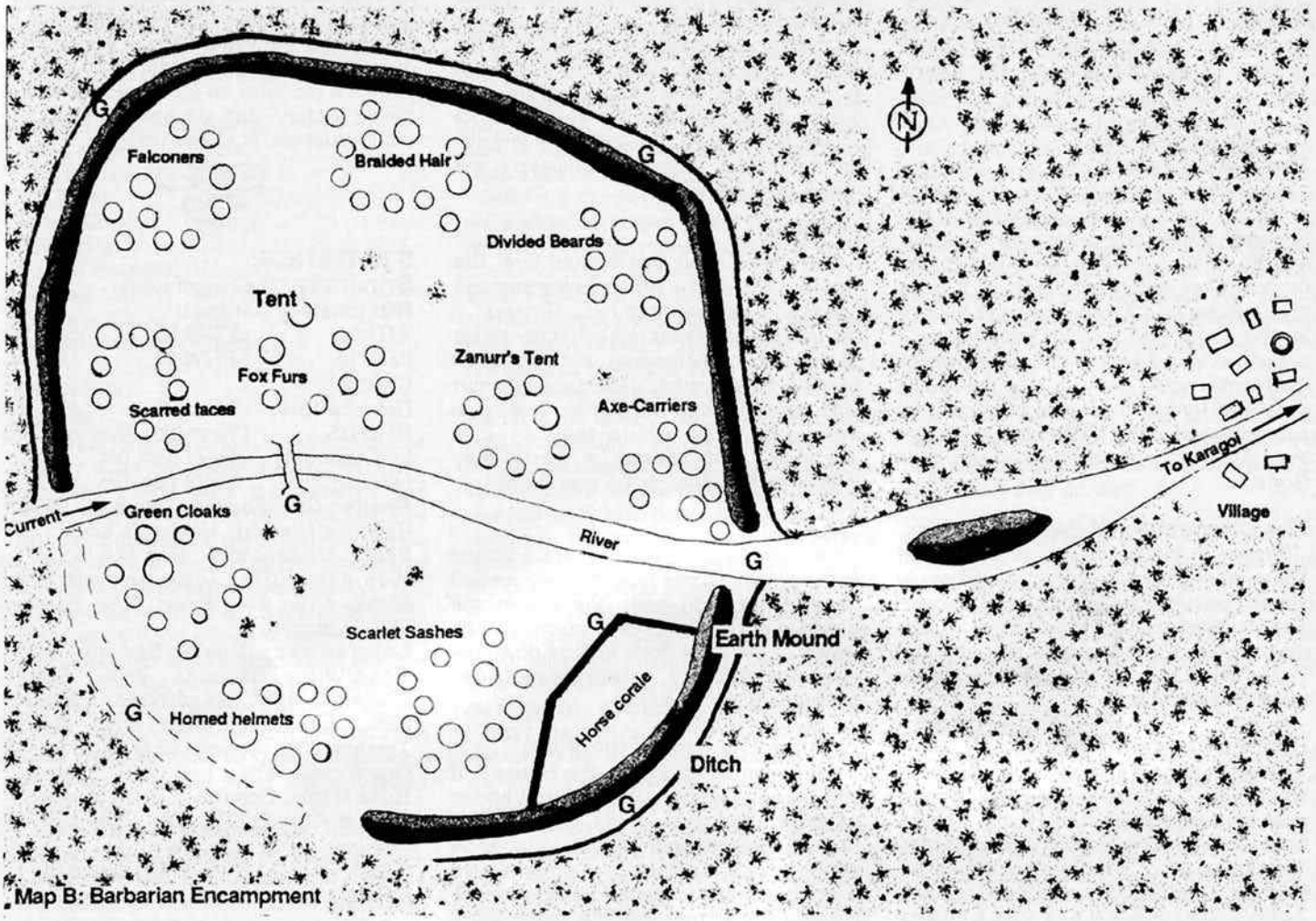
STR: 14	INT: 16	WIS:14
DEX:15	CON:13	CHA:18

Dagger.
Spell Book: Affect Normal Fires, Comprehend Languages, Dancing Lights, Feather Fall, Jump, Light, Unseen Servant: Audible Glamer, Levitate, Magic Mouth, Pyrotechnics.

Madame Magik (Illusion Weaver).
RQ: Priestess of Donandar.

STR: 10	CON: 12	SIZ:11
INT: 17	POW: 20	DEX:17
CHA:15		
Defence: 25%	Move: 8	Hits:13
Head: 0/5	Chest : 0/6	Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm : 0/4	Right Arm:0/4	
Left Leg : 0/5	Right Leg: 0/5	

Spells:
Befuddle, Coordination, Countermagic 3, Detect Enemies, Glamour, Glue 2, Healing 4, Light, Mobility.
Skills: Map Making 35%, Oratory 55%, Climbing 30%, Camouflage 40%, Move Quietly 35%, Play Pipes 65%, Riding 45%, Hide Item 65%.
Languages: Speak Sartarite 90%, Read/Write Sartarite 75%, Speak Tradetalk 45%, Speak Lunar 55%, Speak Tarshite 45%, Speak Darktongue 35%.
Items: 12 point POW storage crystal set into headband.
Rune Magic: Illusory Motion 4, Illusory Sight 4, Illusory Sound 3, Multispell 2.
Dagger (1D4+2) SR7, 25%, Parry 35%, 12 Points.



AD&D: AC7; LVL7; HP20; Illusionist; Human (female); CN;
STR: 10 INT: 17 WIS: 8
DEX: 17 CON:12 CHA:15
Dagger.
Spell Book:
1st level; Change Self, Dancing Lights, Light, Phantasmal Force.
2nd level; Improved PF, Magic Mouth, Mirror Image, Ventriloquism.
3rd level; Spectral Force, Suggestion, Rope Trick.

'Prince' Djandiss

(knife thrower and sword swallower).
RQ: Agimori Initiate of Donandar.
STR:13 CON: 16 SIZ: 15
INT: 15 POW: 12 DEX:18
CHA:15
Defence: 20% Move: 8 Hits : 17
Head: 0/6 Chest: 0/7 Abdomen: 0/6
Left Arm: 0/5 Right Arm: 0/5
Left Leg: 0/6 Right Leg: 0/6
Spells: Coordination, Healing 4, Repair, Speedart.
Skills: Oratory 40%, Climbing 45%, Play Horn 70%, Swimming 30%, Riding 65%, Sword Swallowing 65%, Bargain 45%.
Languages: Speak Praxian 75%, Speak Tradetalk 55%, Speak Old Pavic 25%, Speak Sartarite 65%.
Rapier (1D6+1+1D4) SR4, 35%, Parry 35%, 12 Points.
Throwing Dagger (1D4+1D2) SR1, 95%.
Dagger (1D4+2+1D4) SR6, 30%, Parry 45%, 12 Points.

AD&D:
AC6; LVL2; HP17; Fighter; Human;
STR: 13 INT:15 WIS:12
DEX:18 CON:16 CHA:15
Long Sword.

Note: Djandiss's knife throwing is a special skill, not related to normal fighting.

'Beauty'

(knife thrower's target and tight rope walker).
RQ: Initiate of Donandar.
STR: 12 CON: 14 SIZ: 10
INT: 14 POW: 17 DEX:17
CHA:17
Defence: 40% Move: 8 Hits: 15
Head: 0/5 Chest: 0/6 Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4 Right Arm: 0/4
Left Leg: 0/5 Right Leg: 0/5
Spells:
Bladesharp 4, Coordination, Glamour, Healing 2, Mobility, Protection 2.
Skills: Oratory 35%, Tumbling 55%, Move Quietly 35%, Acting 45%, Dancing 70%, Play Pipes 65%, Riding 45%, Tight-Rope Walking 60%.
Languages: Speak Tarshite 75%, Read/Write Tarshite 35%, Speak Sartarite 55%, Speak Tradetalk 60%.
Rapier (1D6+1) SR5, 85%, Parry 75%, 12 Points.
Dagger (1D4+2) SR7, 30%, Parry 25%, 12 Points.

AD&D: AC7; LVL3; HP24; Fighter; Human (female); NG;
ST R:12 INT: 14 WIS:16
DEX: 17 CON:14 CHA:17
+1 Long Sword (in her wagon).

The Lady Lizzara (Tiger Trainer).

RQ: Aldryami worshipper of Donandar.
STR: 11 CON:14 SIZ: 7
INT: 11 POW:13 DEX:16
CHA:17
Defence:15% Move: 8 Hits: 13
Head:0/5 Chest:0/6 Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4 Right Arm: 0/4
Left Leg: 0/5 Right Leg: 0/5
Spells:
Binding, Shimmer 2, Xenohealing 3.
Skills: Oratory 35%, Listen 75%, Camouflage 65%, Hide in Cover 40%, Move Quietly 55%, Tracking 45%, Riding 35%, Singing 55%, Play Harp 65%.
Languages: Speak Aldryami 60%, Speak Tradetalk 50%, Speak Beastspeech 35%, Speak Grazelander 35%, Speak Sartarite 55%.
Elf Bow (1D8+1) SR1, 45%.
Short Spear (1D6+1) SR5, 35%, Parry 40%, 15 Points.

AD&D: AC8; LVL1; HP7; Fighter; Elf (female); CG;
STR:13 INT: 11 WIS:13
DEX:16 CON:14 CHA:17
Unarmed.

The Tigers:

Karla and Alandore. Each:
STR: 35 CON: 16 SIZ: 30
INT: 5 POW:10 DEX:17
Right Leg: 01-02 2/6 Move: 8
Left Leg: 03-04 2/6 Hits: 22
Hindquarters: 05-07 2/9 Defence: 40%
Forequarters: 08-10 2/9 Head:17-20 2/7
Right Arms:11-13 2/6 Left Arms:14-16 2/6
Skills: Jump 50%, Hide in cover 80%.

Bite (1D10+2D6) SR8, 30%
Claw (1D8+2D6) SR5, 50%.
Two Claws and One Bite/ Round.

AD&D: Karla and Alandore; AC6; HD5+5; HP36,33; Att 2-5/2-5/1-10
+ Rear Claws for 2-8/2-8; surprised only on a 1.

'Professor Strange' (stage magician and fire eater).

RQ: Worshipper of the Lightbringer Eurmal the Trickster.

STR:10	CON:14	SIZ:10
INT:14	POW:10	DEX:18
CHA:15		
Defence: 20%	Move : 8	Hits: 14
Head: 0/5	Chest: 0/6	Abdomen:0/5
Left Arm: 0/4	Right Arm: 0/4	
Left Leg: 0/5	Right Leg: 0/5	

Spells:
Coordination, Detect Gold, Detect Silver, Glamour, Harmonize, Silence.
Skills: Evaluate Treasure 45%, Oratory 75%, Hide Item 90%, Lock Picking 55%, Trap Disarm 35%, Climbing 35%, Listen 45%, Spot Hidden Items 35%, Spot Trap 30%, Pick Pockets 80%, Move Quietly 35%, Acting 45%, Play Horn 45%, Riding 55%, Fire-Eating 45%, Bargain 55%.
Languages: Speak Tarshite 70%, Read/Write Tarshite 35%, Speak Tradetalk 60%, Speak Sartarite 55%.
Dagger (1D4+2) SR7, 35%, Parry 25%, 12 Points.
Shortsword (1D6+1) SR6, 25%, Parry 30%, 20 Points.
Sling (1D8) SR1, 20%.

AD&D:
AC6; LVL5; HP18; Thief; Human; LN;

STR: 10	INT: 14	WIS: 9
DEX: 18	CON:14	CHA:15

Shortsword.

The Mighty Torgul and Giga

RQ: Torgul and Giga

STR: 19	CON: 16	SIZ: 6
INT: 9	POW:10	DEX:16
CHA: 12		
Defence: 15%	Move: 10	Hits : 15
Head:1/5	Chest: 1/6	Abdomen:1/5
Left Arm:1/4	Right Arm:1/4	
Left Leg: 1/5	Right Leg:1/5	

Spells: Binding, Coordination, Protection 2, Strength, Xenohealing 2
Skills:
Oratory 45%, Evaluate Treasure35%, Tumbling 75%, Play Drums 60%, Ride 55%.
Languages: Speak Beastspeech 75%, Speak Tradetalk 45%, Speak Tarshite 35%, Speak Sartarite 55%.
Claw (1D6) SR7, 40%.
Bite (1D8) SR7, 25%
Spear (1D6+1) SR3, 35%, Parry 30%, 15 Points.
Grapple (special) SR7, 95%.

Giga: (Brown Bear).

STR:28	CON:14	SIZ: 29
INT: 5	POW: 5	DEX:14
Defence: 0	Move: 7	Hits: 19

Hindquarters: 05-07 3/9
Forequarters: 08-10 3/9
Left Forearm:14-16 3/6
Right Forearm:11-13 3/6 Head:17-20 3/7
Left Leg:03-04 3/6 Right Leg:01-02 3/6

Skills: Climb 30%, Listen 30%, Track 25%.
Bite (1D10+2D6) SR9, 25%.
Claw (1D6+2D6) SR6, 40%.

AD&D: Torgul
(Wrestler and Bear Keeper)
AC8; LVL3; HP26; Fighter; Dwarf; CN;

STR 18/30 (20 due to Girdle of Stone Giant strength worn below animal skin)		
INT: 9	WIS: 10	DEX:16
CON:16	CHA:12	

Unarmed.

Giga: Brown Bear; AC6; HD5+5; HP32;
Att 1-6/1-6/1-8 + Hug for 2-12.

'Spiral' (clown and tumbler)

RQ: Worshipper of Challana Arroy.

STR: 15	CON: 13	SIZ:12
INT: 12	POW :16	DEX:17
CHA: 13		
Defence:15%	Move: 8	Hits: 13
Head: 0/5	Chest: 0/6	Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4	Right Arm: 0/4	
Left Leg: 0/5	Right Leg: 0/5	

Spells : Coordination, Glamour, Healing 5, Mobility, Protection 2.
Skills: Oratory 80%, Tumbling 60%, Move Quietly 45%, First Aid 35%, Riding 60%, Healing Potions 25%, Play Horn 55%, Acting 40%, Treat Poison 30%, Treat Disease 25%, Find Healing Plants20%.
Languages: Speak Esrolian 65%, Read/Write Esrolian 35%, Speak Tradetalk 25%, Speak Grazelander 35%, Speak Sartarite 60%.

AD&D:
AC7; LVL2; HP11; Cleric; Human; NG;

STR:15	INT: 12	WIS:16
DEX:17	CON:13	CHA:13

Unarmed.
Usual Spells: CLW, CLW, Command, Create Water.

Gorphus the Gross

(clown and labourer)
RQ: Great Troll.

STR: 26	CON:17	SIZ: 26
INT: 8	POW: 8	DEX:12
CHA:8		
Defence:0	Move: 8	Hits: 21
Head: 2/7	Chest: 2/8	Abdomen: 2/7
Left Arm: 2/6	Right Arm: 2/6	
Left Leg: 2/7	Right Leg: 2/7	

Spells: Coordination, Repair.
Skills: Oratory 15%, Tumbling 30%, Play Drums 25%.
Languages:
Speak Darktongue 40%, Speak Tradetalk 10%, Speak Sartarite 20%.
AD&D: Normal Ogre; NG; AC5; HD4+1; HP28; Att 1-10.
Unarmed.

Jando (clown and tumbler).

RQ: Donandarian Duck (worshipper).

STR: 10	CON:15	SIZ: 6
INT: 15	POW:12	DEX:18
CHA:14		
Defence :15%	Move : 5	Hits: 14
Head: 0/5	Chest: 0/6	Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4	Right Arm: 0/4	
Left Leg: 0/5	Right Leg: 0/5	

Spells: Befuddle, Coordination, Glue 3, Healing 2, Mobility, Repair.

Skills: Oratory 65%, Swimming 90%,Hide in Cover 40%, Hide Item 35%, Tumbling 80%, Play Drums 65%, Riding 55%, Accounts 60%, Bargain 55%.
Languages: Speak Sartarite 65%, Read/Write Sartarite 20%, Speak Beastspeech 75%, Speak Lunar 40%, Speak Tarshite 40%, Speak Tradetalk 60%.
Shortsword (1D8) SR7, 30%, Parry 30%, 20 Points.

AD&D:
AC6; LVL2; HP10; Thief; Hobbit; LN;

STR: 13	INT: 15	WIS:12
DEX:18	CON:15	CHA:14

Unarmed.

Zanurr (the Horde's Leader)
RQ: Warrior and Ancestor-Worshipper.

STR:16	CON:16	SIZ:16
INT: 12	POW:17	DEX:15
CHA:17		
Defence :30%	Move : 8	Hits : 18
Head: 4/6	Chest: 5/7	Abdomen: 5/6
Left Leg: 5/6	Right Leg: 5/6	
Left Arm: 5/5	Right Arm: 5/5	

Spells: Binding, Bladesharp 4, Healing 3, Protection 2.
Skills: Oratory 70%, Climbing 55%, Jumping 75%, Tracking 55%, Riding 90%.
Items: Two Spirit Binding Crystals (see below).
Languages: Speak Tradetalk 35%, Speak Grazelander 65%, Speak Tarshite 50%.
Bastard Sword 2H (1D10+1+1D4) SR5, 100%, Parry 95%, 20 Points.
Long Spear 1H (1D8+1+1D4) SR4, 95%, Parry 80%, 15 Points.
Composite Bow (1D8+1+1D2) SR2, 85%.
Medium Shield Parry 90%, 12 Points.

Bound Spirit:
Yandaross:
INT 14, POW 13.
Spells: Coordination, Demoralize, Detect Enemies, Speedart.

Bound Spirit:
Gol: INT 12, POW 15.
Spells: Disruption, Strength, Vigor.

AD&D: AC9 (4 in armour); LVL9; HP85; Fighter; Human; CE;

STR: 16	INT: 12	WIS: 9
DEX:15	CON:16	CHA:17

+2 Bastard Sword;
Short Bow and 12 +1 Arrows.

Skull (Zanurr's Bodyguard)
RQ: Warrior and Ancestor-Worshipper

STR: 15	CON: 13	SIZ: 13
INT: 14	POW:16	DEX:16
CHA:10		
Defence: 20%	Move: 8	Hits: 14
Head: 0/5	Chest: 5/6	Abdomen: 5/5
Left Leg: 5/5	Right Leg: 5/5	
Left Arm: 0/4	Right Arm: 0/4	

Spells: Bladesharp 3, Countermagic 2, Disruption, Healing 2, Invisibility.
Skills: Climbing 65%, Jumping 45%, Listen 40%, Taste Analysis 65%, Move Quietly 75%, Riding 65%, Oratory 70%.
Languages: Speak Tradetalk 40%, Speak Grazelander 70%, Speak Darktongue 15%, Speak Tarshite 60%.
Broadsword (1D8+1+1D4) SR5, 65%, Parry 55%, 20 Points.
Long Spear 1H (1D8+1+1D4) SR4, 55%, Parry 35%, 15 Points.
Medium Shield Parry 65%, 12 Points.

AD&D:
AC3; LVL6; HP49; Fighter; Human; CE;

STR: 15	INT: 14	WIS:16
DEX:16	CON:13	CHA:10

+2 Long Sword.

Thara: (Zanurr's Chief Woman)
RQ: Initiate of Uleria, goddess of sexual love and lust.

STR:12	CON: 16	SIZ: 9
INT: 16	POW:17	DEX:15
CHA:15		
Defence: 25%	Move: 8	Hits: 17
Head: 0/6	Chest: 0/7	Abdomen: 0/6
Left Arm : 0/5	Right Arm : 0/5	
Left Leg : 0/6	Right Leg : 0/6	

Spells: Bladesharp 2, Farsee, Healing 2
Skills: Courtesan 65%, Systemic Poison Making (herbal) potency 12, Blade Venom Potency 6, Antidote Making (herbal) 10, Healing Potion Making 2, Bargaining 35%, Hide Item 35%, Listen 60%, Taste Analysis 55%, Move Quietly 55%, Hide in Cover 45%, Dancing 40%, Riding 35%.
Languages: Speak Tradetalk 60%, Read/Write Tradetalk 45%, Speak Grazelander 80%, Speak Tarshite 65%.
Dagger (1D4+2) SR8, 30%, Parry 25%, 12 Points.

AD&D: AC9; LVL6; HP28; Assassin; Human; LE;

STR:12	INT: 16	WIS:17
CON:15	DEX:15	CHA:15

Hidden +2 Dagger (adapted to take poison); pouches of various poisons (with antidotes), hidden amongst pouches of healing herbs (carefully labelled in code).

Niloth: (Captured Karagoi Leader).
RQ: Dark Troll: Rune Lord of Kyger Litor.

STR:18	CON:15	SIZ: 19
INT: 14	POW:17	DEX:13
CHA:12		
Defence:15%	Move: 8	Hits:17
Head: 1/6	Chest: 1/7	Abdomen: 1/6
Left Arm: 1/5	Right Arm: 1/5	
Left Leg: 1/6	Right Leg: 1/6	

Spells: Darkwall, Disruption, Farsee, Healing 2, Protection 3, Strength.
Skills: Listen 75%, Jumping 95%, Set Trap 85%, Camouflage 90%, Evaluate Treasure 55%, Climbing 55%, Spot Hidden Items 85%, Ambush 45%.
Languages: Speak Darktongue 95%, Speak Tradetalk 55%.
Long Spear 2H (1D10+1+1D6) SR3, 90%, Parry 75%, 20 Points.
Broadsword (1D8+1+1D6) SR5, 105%, Parry 90%, 20 Points.
Large Shield Parry 75%, 16 Points.

Kowffmon: Allied Spirit: Bound into Manlover, Niloth's Lead Spear.
INT: 12 POW: 17
Spells: Bladesharp 4, Detect Enemies, Silence.

AD&D:
AC6;HD6; HP38; Superior Orc; LN;

STR: 16	INT: 14	WIS:17
DEX:12	CON:15	CHA:12 (17 to Orcs)

+2 Broadsword.

High Priest Yarnix:
(Religious Leader).
RQ: Yelm Elder (priest of Yelm).
STR:14 CON:14 SIZ:16
INT: 12 POW:19 DEX:12
CHA15
Defence: 10% Move: 8 Hits: 16
Head: 3/6 Chest: 4/7 Abdomen: 2/6
Left Arm: 1/5 Right Arm: 1/5
Left Leg: 2/6 Right Leg : 2/6
Spells:
Coordination, Countermagic 4, Detect Enemies, Disruption, Spirit Shield 4.
Skills:
Blade Venom Making 9, Oratory 95%, Riding 40%, First Aid 55%, Ambush 35%, Spot Trap 75%, Spot Hidden Item 60%.
Languages:
Speak Grazelander 80%, Read/Write Grazelander 65%, Speak Sartarite 65%, Read/Write Sartarite 55%, Speak Tradetalk 85%, Speak Tarshite 55%.
Rune Magic:
Absorption, Divination, Runepower 2, Shield 2, Sunspear (not reusable).
Quarterstaff (1D8+1D4) SR4, 60%, Parry 55%, 15 Points.
Sawtoothed Greatsword (2D8+1D4) SR5, 50%, Parry 50%, 15 Points.
Composite Bow (1D8+1+1D2) SR3, 60%.
Medium Shield Parry 35%, 12 Points.

Allied Spirit: Molino: Bound into the Greatsword;
INT: 16 POW: 14
Spells: Bladesharp 3, Fanaticism 2, Healing 2, Light, Speedart, Spirit Binding, Strength, Vigor.

Bound Spirit: Oranj: Bound into the Quarterstaff;
INT: 13 POW: 12
Spells: Bludgeon 2, Lightwall.

AD&D: AC10 (4 in armour); LVL7; HP39; Cleric; Human; TE;
STR:14 INT:12 WIS:16
DEX:12 CON:14 CHA:15
Sawtoothed Sword (Evil clerics CAN draw blood!).
Usual Spells: Command, Light, CLW, Hold Person, Know Alignment, Silence 15' Radius, Chant, Augury, Dispel Magic, Cure Disease, CSW.

Kijoss: (Gibbering Idiot).
RQ: Shaman.
STR:15 CON:17 SIZ:14
INT: 11 POW:19 (5) DEX:13
CHA:14
Defence: 10% Move: 8 Hits: 19
Head: 1/7 Chest: 2/8 Abdomen: 2/7
Left Arm: 1/6 Right Arm: 1/6
Left Leg: 1/7 Right Leg: 1/7
Spells:
Befuddle, Fireblade, Healing 3, Strength.
Skills: Evaluate Treasure 35%, Jumping 55%, Listen 55%, Spot Trap 35%, Hide in Cover 45%, Riding 55%.
Languages: Speak Grazelander 65%, Speak Gibberish 80%, Speak Tradetalk 35%, Speak Tarshite 45%.
Heavy Mace 1H (1D8+2+1D4) SR9, 55%, Parry 45%, 20 Points.
Bastard Sword (1D10+1+1D4) SR8, 65%, Parry 45%, 20 Points.

Kanbak: Fetch:
INT: 15 POW: 21
Spells: Binding, Countermagic 3, Detect Enemies, Disruption, Glue 3, Repair.

Olgmat: Controlled Spirit:
INT: 12 POW: 9

Brunvel: Controlled Spirit:
INT: 15 POW: 13

AD&D:
AC3; LVL6; HP43; Fighter; Human; CE;
STR:15 INT: 11 WIS: 5
DEX: 7 CON: 17 CHA:14
+1 Spiked Mace.

Doogal Tarvish: (Hostage).
RQ: Initiate of Ernalda.
STR: 8 CON:14 SIZ:12
INT: 9 POW:11 DEX:7
CHA:15
Defence: 0 Move: 8 Hits: 14
Head: 0/5 Chest: 0/6 Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4 Right Arm: 0/4
Left Leg: 0/5 Right Leg: 0/5
Spells: Healing 2, Xenohealing 2.
Skills: Farming 80%, First Aid 45%, Hide in Cover 35%.
Languages: Speak Grazelander 50%.

AD&D:
AC10; LVL 0; HP2; Normal Human; NG;
STR: 8 INT: 9 WIS:15
DEX: 7 CON: 8 CHA:14
Unarmed.

Moyra Garsh: (Hostage).
RQ: Initiate of Ernalda.
STR:13 CON:15 SIZ:11
INT: 13 POW:12 DEX:15
CHA:11
Defence: 10% Move: 8 Hits: 15
Head: 0/5 Chest: 0/6 Abdomen: 0/5
Left Arm: 0/4 Right Arm: 0/4
Left Leg: 0/5 Right Leg: 0/5
Spells: Farsee, Healing 2.
Skills: Farming 75%, Cooking 85%, Hide in Cover 35%.
Languages:
Speak Grazelander 85%, Speak Tradetalk 45%, Speak Darktongue 35%.

AD&D:
AC9; LVL 0; HP3; Normal Human; LG;
STR: 13 INT:13 WIS:12
DEX: 15 CON:15 CHA:11
Unarmed.

Klara Haimish: (Hostage).
RQ: Initiate of Ernalda.
STR:11 CON:16 SIZ:10
INT: 9 POW:11 DEX:14
CHA: 8
Defence: 05% Move: 8 Hits: 16
Head: 0/6 Chest: 0/7 Abdomen: 0/6
Left Arm: 0/5 Right Arm: 0/5
Left Leg: 0/6 Right Leg: 0/6
Spells: Healing 2, Xenohealing 2.
Skills: Cooking 70%, Farming 45%, Hide in Cover 35%, Climbing 35%.
Languages:
Speak Grazelander 60%, Speak Tradetalk 45%, Speak Darktongue 20%.

AD&D:
AC10; LVL 0; HP5; Normal Human; CG;

STR: 11 INT: 9 WIS:11
DEX:14 CON:16 CHA: 8
Unarmed.

Typical Horde Warrior:
RQ: Yelm Warrior (Initiate).
STR:15 CON:14 SIZ:12
INT: 11 POW:12 DEX:13
CHA:12
Defence: 10% Move: 8 Hits: 14
Head: 3/5 Chest: 3/6 Abdomen: 2/5
Left Arm: 1/4 Right Arm: 1/4
Left Leg: 2/5 Right Leg: 2/5
Spells: 5 Points from: Binding, Bladesharp 2, Demoralize, Disruption, Healing 2, Protection 2, Speedart,Xenohealing 2.
Skills:
Climbing 35%, Jumping 40%, Hide in Cover 30%, Spot Trap 30%, Spot Hidden Item 40%, Tracking 20%, Riding 50%.
Languages:
Speak Grazelander 55%, Speak Tarshite25%, Speak Tradetalk 25%.
Long Spear 1H (1D8+1+1D4) SR5, 45%, Parry 40%, 15 Points.

Composite Bow (1D8+1+1D2) SR2, 35%.
Bastard Sword 1H (1D10+1+1D4) SR6, 40%, Parry 35%, 20 Points.

AD&D: AC5; LVL4; HP29; Fighter; Various Alignments;
STR: 15 INT:11 WIS:10
DEX: 13 CON:14 CHA:12
Longsword or Battleaxe.

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'MY DEAR LORD WHIPLASH: YOU MAY REMEMBER MY HUSBAND AND I, FOR WE SPENT MUCH OF THE EVENING TOGETHER AT LORD RHONDDA'S WONDERFUL PARTY OF SEPTEMBER LAST...'
'IT WAS THEN THAT YOU TOLD US OF YOUR INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY AND HORRIFIC...'
WHIPLASH
The Shadow on the Sky
WRITTEN BY WARREN ELLIS.
ILLUSTRATED BY STEWART (STAZ) JOHNSON.
'THE EVENTS OF RECENT WEEKS LEAD ME TO ASK FOR YOUR HELP.'
'THE INCIDENTS OF THE LAST TWO MONTHS HAVE FORCED ME TO WRITE TO YOU, INVITING YOU AND THE ASSISTANTS YOU SPOKE OF TO STAY WITH US...'
CIELHENGE HALL

'...INDEFINITELY.'
IS IT... THANK THE LORD, IT IS
LORD WHIPLASH, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GLAD I AM TO SEE YOU.
HARRY, CASSANDRA... THIS IS LADY CIELHENGE, WHO WROTE TO ME.
MY LADY, THIS IS HARRY AMBROSE, JOURNALIST WITH THE DAILY CRIER,
AND CASSANDRA BELLINGHAM, DAUGHTER OF JUDGE BELLINGHAM OF THE BAILEY.
LORD WHIPLASH'S ASSISTANTS, YES? PLEASED TO MEET YOU BOTH.
WHERE IS LORD CIELHENGE? TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST I EXPECTED HIM TO GREET US...
HE'S IN THE DRAWING ROOM.
...LORD CIELHENGE?

NOOO, NO, NO, NO. I'M JUST AN OBSTRUCTION, BOY. YES, A BRICK WALL, I'M AFRAID, YES, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, PUPPY?
... JUST... JUST GOT IN THE WAY, I SUPPOSE...
YES, I THINK YOU DID.
STAZ '86
IS THIS WHY YOU CALLED ME? YOUR LETTER WAS RATHER VAGUE...
I THINK YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT, LORD WHIPLASH. LOOK AT THE PUPPY.
NOT ONLY IS MY HUSBAND INSANE, HE HAS ADOPTED A MONSTER. AND ALSO...
DENNY, DO WE REALLY WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THIS? IT LOOKS LIKE ONE FOR THE ALIENISTS - AND THE VETS TOO.
DENNY-
LOOK AT THIS!
I THINK, MR AMBROSE, THAT THIS PROVES THAT OUR PLIGHT IS A LITTLE MORE THAN 'ONE FOR THE ALIENISTS.'

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

"**Zhirek** was careful. His life had too often depended on a split-second of warning, on a moment's decision for him not to be careful.

"His gaze searched the bar meticulously before he entered. Some quiet locals to the left: he could keep his back to them. He made his way to the counter with quick, agile steps. As he ordered his drink he watched the barman with a nonchalent look, but with eyes that could have pierced through stone. He had to leave a message somewhere. Could he trust this man?

"Behind the bar a small, yellow-faced man fumbled for the Easterner's drink. A none-too-clean glass was under-filled from a dusty bottle. The man's hand shook as he replaced the bottle (nearly empty, but treasured like a jewel) on a grimy shelf. He turned, aimlessly flattened down his straggled grey hair, smiled, took the money and then seemed to forget Zhirek altogether. Zhirek noticed a greasy thumbprint on the glass.

"Ideal! Zhirek sat down at a corner table, still watching but confident. The man was weak, greedy, slow. With a knife at his neck he would do anything. With safe money in his pocket he would keep his mouth shut. And with Zhirek's warning in his ears he would never have the guts to open the letter. The little easterner smiled. That evening he would pay the handsome little devil a visit he wouldn't soon forget..."

As the saying goes, "it's not where you are, it's who you're with". However boring a situation you might be in, it can be made interesting, novel, and maybe even exciting by the people around you. And it's the same in RPGs as it is in life. The people with the players (the non-player characters) can make the drabbest scene come alive. If well used, the NPC can be the single most invaluable tool of the GM.

In terms of simple game-mechanics, the advantages of well-thought-out NPCs are huge:

1) Give an NPC a colourful history, and you give all that colour to the atmosphere of your campaign.

2) Give an NPC a clear-cut character and the GM can play him logically and fairly - no more bland pieces of cannon-fodder that are the death of believability in a game.

3) Give an NPC a personality and he has a right to be an intergral part of the game. He can be a member of the party. He can even be the whole reason for an adventure, a frightening challenge for the players to pit their wits not against rules or abstracts, but against people.

4) Perhaps nicest, a caringly imagined NPC can be a return-payment to the DM for his hours of work creating the adventures. Through an NPCs persona, at last he actually gets to play in one of his own worlds.

The advantages of the NPC in those broadest terms are clear.

The scene with Zhirek shows the advantages on a smaller scale too. Probably the most tedious and typical RPG encounter of all -player character (yawn) meets barman- is brought alive by the barman having a personality. He is not just one in a long line of identity-parade Butterburs, he is himself. With a good NPC, even the most tawdry cliche can be made to have a little sparkle!

The principle is clear. Give your NPCs character, and the plot, and the adventures that follow them will shine as they shine.

Easy to say, though, but more difficult to do. This article outlines some ideas on how to create these instant characters, and how to spring ideas of stories and scenario's from them. How, in short, to give your encounters character...

Obviously, not all the NPCs need to be developed to the same degree. Most will just flit in and out of the PC's lives like shadow figures, never to be remembered again. It would be a waste of time for the GM to work on these.

Every NPC needs something different though, in case he might become a more prominent figure in the plot. You never know until the game works itself out just who the characters are going to turn to, just who will catch your imagination and become a figure you feel can grow.

The most elementary method (but a good one) to instantly characterise someone is to give some definite physical appearance. Look around the streets, or into your memory for ideas... Give him overshadowing black eye-brows. Give him an odd smell - of hair-lacquer, or too-strong soap, or maybe of incense. Give him a curious limp, or close-together beady eyes, or make him incredibly fat and sweaty, or very thin and cadaverous. Why not give him cracked teeth, or bad breath, or a bald head? An air of mystery, or an air of stupidity. Or maybe make him shifty, or anti-social, or suspicious.

Whatever you decide, make him distinctive and your players will remember those salient characteristics of his appearance long after they've forgotten that trap they got through, or those 3,000 gold pieces they found...

If you jot down in a note book a number of these instant characters, then you can use them whenever your players meet someone. When they ask the young son of the farmer if he'll have a drink with them, they'll not just be asking a non-descript 'young son', rather a somewhat red-faced young man, with very blonde hair, and slightly bloodshot, wild looking blue eyes. When they sleep the night in the crofter's hay barn they will have noticed his pale-faced brunette daughter, whose eyes seemed to shine when she looked at them... and they might need to make some careful decisions on how much sleep it's wise to get before a days adventuring!

Believe me it's worth every minute of time you spend giving these simplest NPCs some colour. It's these things that make the good game excellent, and that make the exciting, fantastical encounters all the more stimulating when they come.

From these most sketchily, most simply described characters it is fairly easy to build up more personality if necessary. At this stage it is best to tie in looks directly with actions ie. the shifty looking is shifty, since it would be grossly unfair to any party at this stage to suddenly play the "well he may look like a wimp, but he's really a 10th level fighter in disguise" trick!

So, using that image that your few words have created in your mind, just look sideways, think about what such a character in such a position might be...

Let's take barmen as an example since they're so common.

Zhirek's barman, the fumbling, slovenly, mean old man with his straggling grey hair, will of course be as weak as Zhirek thinks him. But this might be more of a danger than the easterner imagines. Bars are always crucial places in lawless worlds. They are the meeting places for those who want to meet. They are

WITH CHARACTER

By Richard Lee

barometers of (even leaders of) the opinions, the feelings of the community. Most importantly, they are the open ear to whatever might be going on...

So, Zhirek's barman, a weak character, might easily be in someone elses power. Someone curious for information. A ruthless gang perhaps, or a crook, or some magic user with ambitions... Zhirek must be careful before leaving his message, careful to be more frightening, more persuasive than the barman's master. Or else he might quickly become embroiled in the plans of a very worthy and dangerous adversary.

Other types of barmen might be just as menacing, if the GM wishes to elaborate a plot at this stage.

The tall, heavily moustached barman, with dead eyes and a too ready-smile. He is likely to be a crook himself, with interests in a lot of the local clandestine activities. He will be scheming for every penny the party have.

The good-natured old man, with a wrinkled face and eyes red from staring too long at the warm embers of fires on cold winter evenings, will probably be as honest as he looks. But he will be as foolish and as blind too. Someone might easily be using him without his knowledge, or threatening him, or making life very difficult for him because he's too honest. An unwary party might find themselves fighting his battles for him!

The red-faced farmer's son is indeed as wild as he seems, he is frequently drunk, has few friends and has a pechant for gambling. His father doesn't know of his debts- and the young man will do anything to prevent him knowing and/or get the money back.

Perhaps he would join a party of adventurers...he would be rash, inexperienced, careless and bossy if he did. Or maybe he sells his services to others, and might wish to thwart the party's ambitions...

The pale brunette, meanwhile, has no such excitement or trouble in her life. She is bored. She has no husband, and no lover, and her lovelessness has become an obsession with her. She has tried a little spell casting, some potion mixing, some witch's charms with mommets and dark prayers and blood...she is beginning to travel along a dangerous path. She might try one of the potions on the party, to whatever effect - probably sickness rather than love! She might be very hurt, very vindictive if a player spurns her advances or leaves her too soon after. She might even, truly, have some magical abilities.

How the party treat her will determine whether she is enemy or friend, damsel-in-distress or night-black curse...

From the appearance, therefore, you can quickly conjure up more of a character. And from that character, as you see, a lot of story might spring.

That, then, is one way to give peripheral, chance-met characters a little life. Most fun, though, can be had from creating the big baddies, the player's real adversaries. Centre your adventures around a **Moriarty** or a **Fu Manchu** and you get the best out of role-playing...

The best way of creating these characters, I find, curiously, is opposite to the way I've suggested for creating the lesser characters: it's best to leave them faceless for as long as possible.

Build them up through lesser characters ... through the people who suffer through their ruthlessness, through the people who are in their pay, eventually through the people who actually work for them. Build up an aura, an atmosphere around them. And a name. Names become all important here. Then, when the time comes, the physical appearance, that face, those eyes will be all the more powerful, all the more fearsome. An influential person you always hear rumours about before you see.

Choose your rumours carefully and you have the best start for introducing the player-characters to your anti-hero.

To keep things on a manageably small scale, let's take a village scene as an example.

The most prominent person, the most obviously powerful, is the village elder or mayor. In that small world he must be the man with power - or at least, the man with power must rule through him.

Anyone in authority collects gossip, so the first thing to do is to think up some rumours about him... He'll have a quirk, a preoccupation he's always obsessed with, which the common people will be quick to seize on. Maybe he is devout, a religious zealot. Maybe he is debauched, drinks too much wine, throws too many parties for his own good. Maybe he is obsessed with trade, with wealth. Maybe he's just content to act superior, to wear rich clothes, to walk aloof. Maybe he is ill, dying, crippled or hypercondriacle. Or perhaps he has more personal idiosyncracies than these - a love of animals, for instance, or a pathelogical hatred of strangers. Maybe a hate of idlers, or alcohol, or a mistrust of magic, or women, or anything strange or new....

Take one, or a couple of these combined and soon you have much humour and rumour rife in the village. This is the first part of your background....

Next, in conjunction with one of these idiosyncracies, there should be some scandal attached to his person. The way the scandal is talked about will soon show how popular or unpopular the elder is. A player who keeps his ear to the ground might soon hear..."He sets himself up as so religious, but you remember what happened to Ilya's dance last Autumn. She hardly got away with her clothes on!" Or, "Well, another pretty maid has come a wooing, but old **Cold-Shoulder** only seems to have eyes for his sheep!" Or maybe, **"Hearty-Fool** lost almost a third of his grain this year because he was too drunk to look after it properly. It makes an honest man's blood boil to think we pay him all our hard-earned silver in taxes just so he can buy more casks of eastern wine!"

So the village magnates begin to come into sharper focus: choose your central feature and your rumour well, and a slightly disturbing picture is beginning to paint itself. But still all is deliciously rustic.

The time has come to lay a shadow across the scenes....

Ilya isn't our religious elder's only weakness. Not by a long way. Constantly the attractions of the flesh prove too strong for him, and he breaks the vows of his so austeer creed. Guilt eats him. The only way he can sleep at nights is by punishing himself, driving himself to still harsher strictures, still harder repentence.

And the village, too are beginning to feel the weight of his faith. Shadows of an inquisition begin to stretch vulture-fingers across the land. And recently he's been seeing a lot of a certain "spiritual advisor" - a small man, a fanatic, who no-one

seems to know much about. Except his name. But is this **Grimblan** as religious as he seems, or does he perhaps have other plans...?

And old **Cold-Shoulder**, forever counting the profit and the loss, with his mind always out in the fields, is scarcely aware that some strange, rough-looking adventurers have come into the village visiting Andreas the merchant.

Andreas the black as he is more commonly known. Andreas whose daughter Cold-Shoulder rejected.

Andreas who first came to the village five years ago with such a hunted look in his eyes that many people thought he was a convict or a cut-throat, not the wealthy traveller he said he was. Cold-Shoulder hasn't noticed the strange men yet, but he'd better notice them soon or it could be the worse for everyone....

And **Hearty-Fool**, though he dresses like a prince and spends money like water, has fallen seriously into debt. Money is now his only object, as creditors gather like wolves at his door. He is a ruthless man. Beneath the slack facade that years of abuse have built up, he is not nearly so weak and foolish as he seems. Sometimes you see it in his eyes - the look of his father, a hawk of a man who had carved out his fortune as a mercenary captain in the king's pay. The church, with all its rich silver, had better beware.

Indeed any with riches would do well to watch their backs. And with a border-war brewing, who knew what lawlessness was on the way....

Now, with this kind of background, the anti-hero can quickly leap into real colour. Players can gather bits of the above - maybe all - from heresay. Further facts come to light as they find the burnt out wrecks of homes destroyed, as they talk to the tearful families of missing persons, as they are warned off and threatened indark alleys by masked men. Then, perhaps, they might confront the store-keeper who sold them drugged supplies - question him and feel the presence of the anti-hero loom inkier and inkier.

They can follow the paths of their intended adventure - to the old ruined temple in the hills, and find troubles deliberately placed in their way to thwart them: all marked with his insignia, stained with his presence. And eventually they must act directly against him, their real enemy, destroy him before he destroys them. They must meet him face to face....

The man at the priest-lord's shoulder was cowled all in black, but his eyes burned red. Grimblan! As the characters realised their peril, already the sorcery was beginning to grow, between his fingers, between his hands, at last between his arms. And then in a flash of darkness....

"The cell was dark, water dripping from dank walls and a rat scraping somewhere in a corner. Then suddenly the door opened, the light blinding as they rattled in their chains. Andreas! So it was he who was responsible for the outlaw bands, for the disappearences, for the murder of the village elder...But what good would their knowledge do them now?

"Arren had fallen. Meredith, he was sure, was dead. Dorian had disappeared. As the door of the temple burst inwards only he was left standing, sword in hand, to defend the altar. Like a whirlwind he stood his ground against the clatter of hooves from all sides. But what could he do, one against so many? His opponent's eyes seered him like black fire. Nothing would stand between that devil and the jewels and silver that were his craving...."

Terrible enemies indeed!

With such characters, the plots of games move by themselves, more and more becoming the fantasy worlds FRPGs should be, less and less the rules-wars that characterless games are. There's no need to throw away the old plots - the hidden treasures, the tombs, the ruins in the hills, the dungeons to be looted. Just enrich them with other characters, other enemies, other concerns. With character behind them, the fights, the treasures, the winning and the losing will always come alive.

And of course, if the going ever gets too tough for the anti-hero, he won't stay to the bitter end: he'll run. And wherever the party adventure in the future, he *will* be there, maybe, on their tail following, waiting, smouldering with revenge. In encounters with character, the story goes ever on....

Alignment And Personality

By Venetia Lee

Alignment is a helpful but not indispensible tool for role playing. I don't intend to join the debate on whether it should be used at all, but to discuss how its use can aid rather than hinder interesting play.

On its own, and interpreted too strictly, the usefulness of alignment is limited. This can mean that for players and DMs alike it forms a sort of strait-jacket for personality, leading to "kneejerk" reflex reactions - "You are good; you destroy evil temple." "I am evil; I never let prisoners live."

To make the role playing of personality both balanced and rounded, alignment should operate in counterpoint to alternative motivations. These may be drawn from players own characterisations or the setting designed by the DM.

Hence in a particular campaign, two characters of the same alignment might react differently depending on whether they are Norse or Greek, greedy or generous.

PERSONALITY

It is tempting to use alignment to determine personality- all positive character traits being good and all negative ones evil and so on. In reality, however, people are far more complex.

Much as we do not like to admit it, concentration camp guards can go home to play lovingly with their children, and charity workers may abuse their families in a rage. Moreover, the definition of evil varies form place to place- even modern churchmen disagree over the ethics of nuclear warfare..... In a discussion of RPGs there is no need to go into such deep water, but we must recognise that the perfectly good or totally chaotic person is very rare and rather limiting. Conflicts of character and ethics are far more likely- people rarely live up to their ideals. To be good does not preclude meanness over money nor does being evil prevent feelings of friendship (although such a person may find them easier to ignore).

Alignment should be blended with personality and rarely dominate it. For an example, let us analyse the building of a character from the initial dice rolls. Starting off with the statistics **15, 12, 12, 11, 17, 12,** let us decide that Elven, Fighter-Thief is a reasonable choice for class and race. Presuming the character to be male and that he is about to join an established campaign, with other characters of 4 - 6th level, his level is decided to be 3rd in both classes. Obviously, he is going to have to take a back seat to his tougher companions so let us make a virtue out of necessity and give him an inferiority complex - which causes him to lurk around at the back of the party and even run away on occasion. This leads on to a whole load of ideas about his background, among which we can decide he has an alcohol problem - in that he hits the bottle, whenever he has nothing better to do, so as to forget his feelings of failure. Now, it really wouldn't be much fun playing a character who appears totally incompetant and cowardly, but the fact is he is neither. In the first place he is more capable as fighter and thief than he his confidence suggests and, between his dexterity and racial bonuses, an excellent bowman, assuring a useful role to his companions. In the second, not only is his problem more complex than simple cowardice, but his assumed alignment is **Neutral Good** so sometimes he can't run away no matter how much he wants to. Now that we have a personality and an alignment for this character, the next problem is to consider

why he should join an adventuring party at all. The scenario being played is the scouting of an ogre army about to invade our character's adopted home. Considering alignment alone, there is no question that he would volunteer, however, with his dominant personality characteristics, the call to arms finds him staring into a glass of whiskey complaining that he would only make a mess of things and put his companions at risk! Obviously to stay in the game, we have to find a way out of the impasse. It comes from the setting, his ambitious parents, fed up with this "drunken layabout" kick him out into the snow to do his duty. Once in action, he will provide useful backup, using his bow from a safe distance until the injuries to the tougher character make him find his courage; after all, he could not abandon those even weaker than himself to the foe...

The above example considered a *good* character. The same approach can make an evil character far more acceptable to play, and easier to integrate into a mixed alignment group. Obviously, a character who is evil in the sense of having a deep hatred for everything, and the desire to dominate or destroy (your Darth Vader-types), will not co-operate with anyone (and probably just stew in his own bitterness). However, a less extreme evil character might simply believe that the end justifies the means, to the extent that he would perform any act, no matter how terrible, in order to further his aims. In this case, the capacity for evil may well be latent. Such characters may have regard for family, friends or country and, although capable of terrible deeds on their behalf, his ambitions might be such as would not disgrace a paladin- to save his native city or to keep faith with family- and his personality acceptable, as there is room in his life for friendship and appreciation of the enjoyable things in life. In an adventuring party, the effort by good characters to keep such a companion under control provides a lot of interesting role-playing. For example, a lawful evil fighter **Ranulph** has a fierce blood lust and absolutely no conscience when it comes to disposing of enemies. However, his good qualities include loyalty to his friends, and he is always responsive to authority. Among his adventuring companions is **Silvia the ranger;** beautiful, clever, and tougher than him. He admires her greatly and would kill any one for her any time, but ask if she wanted him to first! The interaction between the two requires Silvia to keep him in check and use his ruthless qualities only on those who deserve it.

SETTING

The setting of a campaign may also provide motivations for characters. These can pull a party together, or provide areas of conflict (not necessarily a bad thing). For example, the party's native city, **Thorselda** was founded by Celts before being overrun by Orcs, who enslaved the human inhabitants. As time went on, some of these began to re-establish control through the bureaucracy, and few were without a little orcish blood. At this point, a coalition of Norse tribes "Liberated" the city, taking it as their own. The remnant Celtic population are now second class citizens and smoulder with resentment. Most of Thorselda's people sink their differences when faced with the non human threat [a few Celts claim to prefer Orc rule] , but it is an uneasy alliance. The player characters, being both Norse and Celtic, have to deal with their conflicting loyalties as well as clashes of personality and alignment. For example **Imcar,** the Cleric, is continually at loggerheads with the revolutionary elements of her own church for "Collaborating"; one day she might have to choose between her people and her friends, and **Stowdan,** the social climbing wizard will always be 'sniffed at' in some aristocratic Norse circles for his parvenu Celtic friends. As well as encouraging conflict, the setting may provide motivation for unexpected alliances. Instead of automatically destroying an evil temple, a good party might find it to be an outpost of human civilisation that they are pledged to defend, lest marauders overrun their coutry's farmland. They may well feel that it's removal is an ultimate aim, but in the meantime, there they are in council of war with the high priest, who proves to be a witty and pleasant companion. A common complaint about role playing is that players abandon their alignment (or other aspects of personality) in pursuit of experience points or money. Various techniques have been proposed to deal with this - most concerning the external structure of the game such as loss of levels or experience points. This detracts from realism in a way that can be avoided in a well structured campaign world. This is where *setting* comes into its own. To be useful, the full range of alignments, professions and personalities should be accomodated- providing characters with suitable friends, temples, people to train them, appropriate guilds and factions of guilds, etc.

A PC who strays from appropriate alignment, or acts out of character may find that these supporters desert them. For example, contrast **Kara** the dwarven thief (chaotic neutral) with **Firex,** the aristocratic fighter (neutral good). The former if caught red handed in a burglary may find some of her old drinking aquaintances in jail. They can advise which of the guards may be bribed for better treatment and how to stay on the right side of the judge she is up before, whilst she already *knows* of a good lawyer. In contrast, should **Firex** decide to pick a fight in the street because she "needs twenty five experience points to reach 8th. level", her friends can not be assumed to be cooperative. They won't be putting up bail, or even sending her food parcels to the lockup. Moreover her fellow prisoners and even the guards might take this as a golden opportunity to torment one of the privileged fallen amongst them. Then, when she finally appears before the magistrates, a dim view might be taken of someone with her reputation brawling like a street urchin, injuring an innocent person without provocation.

ALIGNMENT CHANGES

The above assumes that alignment drift should be penalised. However, one of the faults of the standard alignment system is that it precludes change and, for effective role playing, changes may be necessary. For example **Ranulph** started out as evil chiefly because he had never known anything better. Over his three years of adventuring, the influences of **Silvia** (and others) has altered him. He will never see the point of being altruistic, but abandons blood lust for a more controlled use of forces, becoming merely lawful neutral. Gradual changes of this kind, however, can always be accomodated *within* a campaign setting without the penalities associated with gratuitous change.

Sudden alterations are also possible, without poor role playing, as a traumatic incident brings enlightenment (or the loss of faith!). This will inevitably cause problems for the character in the campaign setting, but a good DM knows when to make these prohibitiva. A character who suddenly "sees the light" will have some explaining to do to their former mentors, but may gain support from the new faith.

ALIGNMENT AND NPCs

Much of what I have already said applies to nonplayer as well as player characters. In addition, when I referee I warn people to judge others on what they have actually done, not on the potential acts their alignment implies; it is neither lawful nor good to kill people just because they are "evil"- there must be some justification like self defence, open warfare, or retribution for proven acts.

To encourage this, I restrict use of the spell KNOW ALIGNMENT, firstly by increasing its level to fourth and secondly by making its indiscriminate use socially unacceptable. It is an insult, rather like doubting someone's word, and can only be cast on someone with their consent (which won't be freely given) or where they are already proven to have broken the law (and as such can only be an *aid* to sentencing; alignment is not *proof* of an offence!). Incidentally, this is an aid to plot design for scenarios- no one can ask "Why didn't the Duke just have **KNOW ALIGNMENT** cast on all his servants before employing them, so that the evil Steward could never have got into the household?.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the player should be to role play well, and for this no external consideration (like experience points) should predominate, nor should any internal constraint be so rigid as to prevent response to changing situations. Alignment is the *ultimate arbiter* where the decision a PC must take is an ethical one. However, their everyday actions will be determined far more by a blend of their personality with the social and political realities of the campaign setting.

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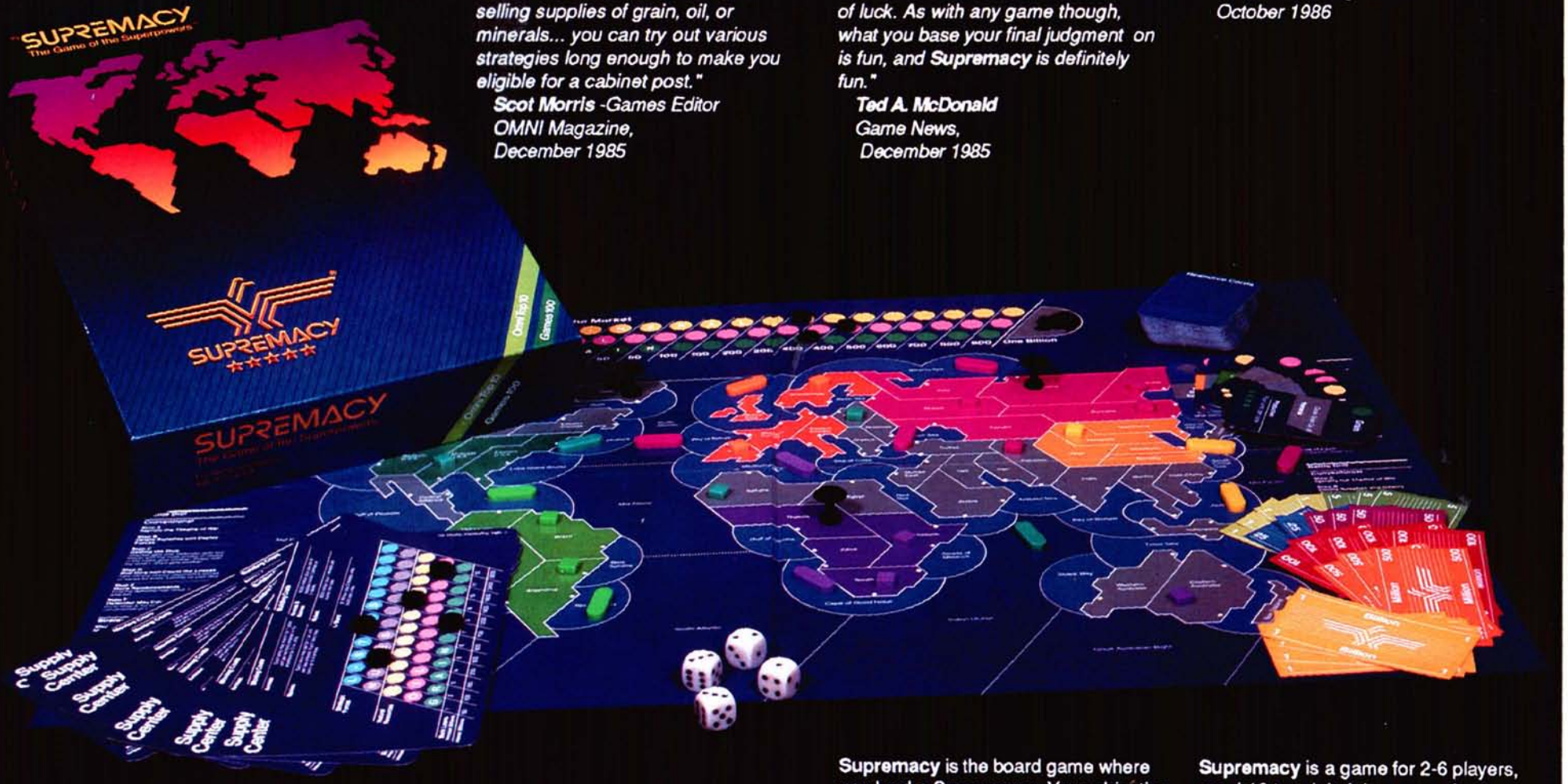

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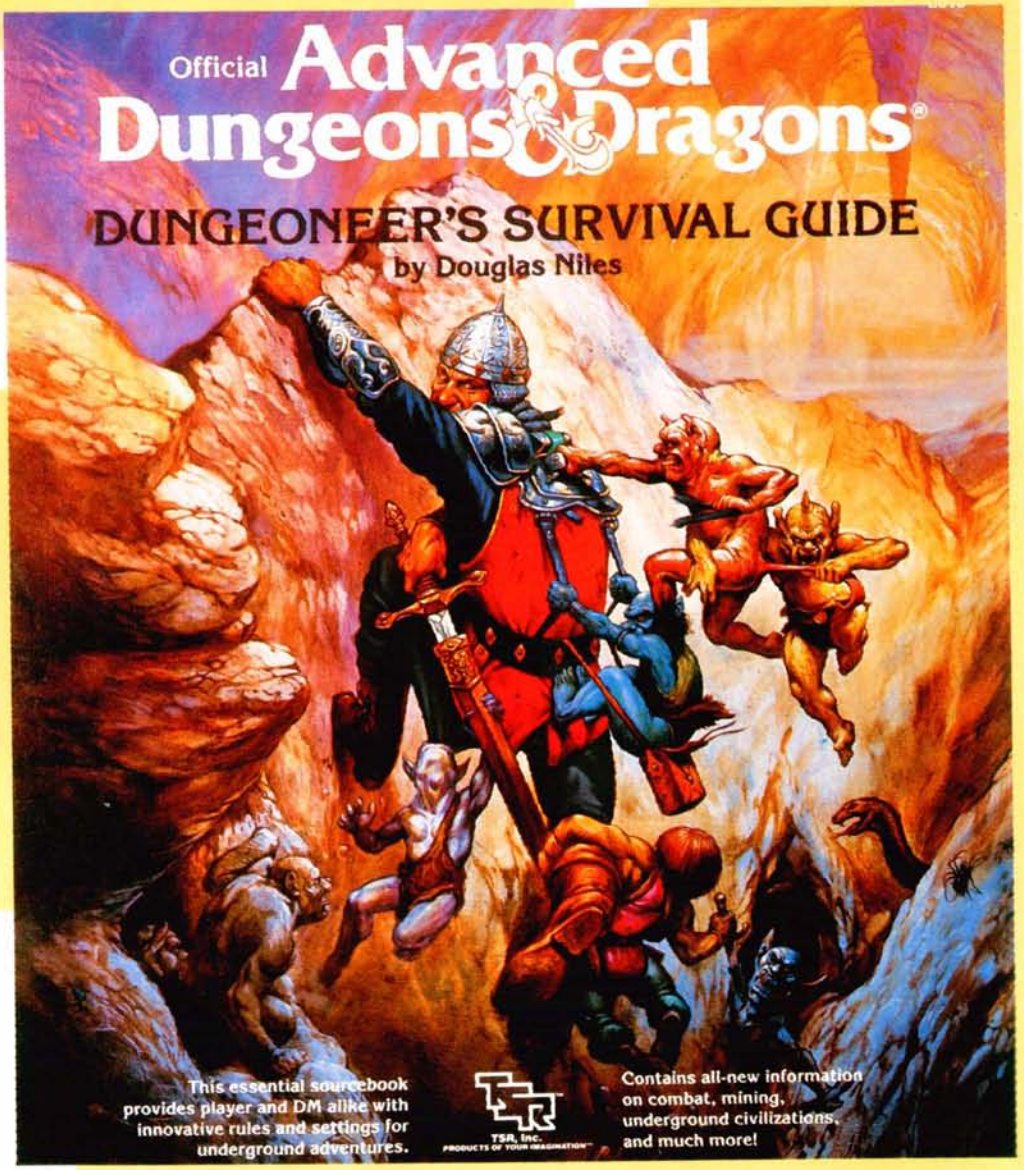
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